

SAINT PAULS.

DECEMBER, 1868.

THE SACRISTAN'S HOUSEHOLD.

A STORY OF LIPPE-DETMOLD.

CHAPTER XVI.

OTTO BELIEVES IN FAIRY TALES.

"Is it you, Otto?" exclaimed Liese, raising the lamp above her head and looking out into the darkness.

"Yes, Lieschen; I and no other, and I must come in for a moment. I want to speak to you."

"Mistress is out, and master too, and——. Who was that with you, Otto?"

"That is a relation of mine. Halloa! Why, where has he vanished to? Never mind. He would not have wished to come in here, in any case. Shut the door, Lieschen, and go in out of the cold." Otto did not wait for permission to enter, but stepped into the hall and shut the heavy oaken door with a clanging noise. Little Liese's strength would scarcely have sufficed to close it against the sudden furious gust of March wind that came swooping and shrieking round the house, making the casements rattle and the old ivy beat furiously upon the glass.

"What a wind!" said Liese, shivering sympathetically.

"Yes; a bitter night enough. But I walked fast, and am all aglow. Well, Lieschen, am I to stand here in the hall all night? You might ask a fellow to step inside to the kitchen fire. I'm afraid you're not over and above glad to see me."

"It is not that, Otto. You know I am glad to see you. But about asking you to come in;—I don't know;—I am not sure it would be right. Master and mistress are both out, and——."

"All the better. We can talk quietly. Now see, Lieschen, I am not one to thrust myself into another man's house, or to go where I'm not wanted. But I am very sure there is no harm in my coming to speak to you to-night. I don't wish you to deceive your mistress.

Tell her that I have been here, if you like. But I must say a word to you."

Liese meekly led the way to the kitchen. She trembled a little as she did so. What could Otto have to say to her that must be said then and there? Besides, she could not repress an uneasy twinge of conscience when she reflected that to receive him at all was to act contrary to her mistress's injunctions. "I cannot allow you to have visitors. There must be nobody admitted to my house without my permission," Fran von Schleppers had said over and over again. But then Otto thought it right to come in; and what Otto thought right it was impossible for gentle little Liese to think wrong. She set her lamp down on the snowy deal table in the kitchen, and Otto came and took her hand and stood beside her, looking into her soft, brown eyes until they drooped beneath his gaze.

"I hope there is nothing the matter, Otto?" she said, timidly.

"I hope not, Lieschen. But I cannot tell yet how things may be. Listen to what I have to say to you."

Then he related to her how Herr Schmitt, who, as she knew, had long been ailing, had been ordered by the doctor to leave Detmold for the mild climate of Southern France. How the business was to be given up, and the stock of the stationer's shop sold, and how he, Otto, was consequently out of employment, and would have to seek an occupation as soon as might be. Liese was very sorry for Herr Schmitt. She liked him because he had been kind to Otto, and at first she could only think how strange and sad it would be for the invalid to go away alone to a foreign country, and how Otto would miss his good friend and master. Then another consideration arose in her mind. "Does your uncle the Herr Küster know?" she asked.

"He does not know as yet. A letter has been written to him, and I am going to Horn myself to-morrow morning."

"I wonder what he will say!" murmured Liese musingly.

"I'm afraid I know what he will say, partly. He will want me to find another situation in some shop. Now that I don't mean to do. At least—Sieh 'mal, Lieschen! I can't explain to you what a strong feeling it was that made me come here to-night. It was just as though something or somebody outside of myself was drawing me, whether I would or no. I couldn't have stayed away to save my life. Did you never feel like that, Lieschen?"

Liese shook her head doubtfully. "I often wish very much to go to Horn, and take a peep at dear Cousin Franz. And sometimes even when I am sitting by myself in the kitchen of an evening, I can fancy myself at the farm, and can see all the place, and hear the goats bleating, and the geese cackling, and Lotte and Marthe singing at the spinning-wheel. But then, you know, of course it's only fancy; and I can't go there, though I might wish it ever so."

"Not 'ever so,' Liese. If you wished it 'ever so'! If you wished it as strong as I wished to come here to-night,—why you'd have to go. You couldn't help yourself."

Liese looked up for a moment into Otto's bright resolute face, and then observed, with a little demure air of reflection, "Ah well, you see, Otto, I suppose it is because I can't wish nor do anything so strong as you can. At least I never find that I get what I want by wishing."

"Well, never mind about that, Lieschen. Here I am; and I have a great many things to say to you," returned Otto, declining with characteristic practicalness to enter into any vague or abstract discussion. "You know, Lieschen," he went on, "that I never liked this shop work. I never would have consented to enter into the business for three years, only that I knew Uncle Schnarcher had been dreadfully disappointed at my refusing to be a clergyman, and I thought somehow, that I ought to make him what amends I could without going against my conscience."

"Yes; I know, Otto. And I think it was quite right to obey your uncle."

"Right to obey in some things, and right to disobey in others. But then, you see, all the time I have been with Herr Schmitt I have been growing more and more sure that I can't make a tradesman of myself. It's no use. He himself says as much, although he is very good to me, and, I believe, likes me in his heart." Liese thought in her heart that it must be a very strange person who would not like Otto. But she kept this opinion to herself for the present. "Now chance has released me from this employment, in a way that nobody could have foreseen. I am fond of Herr Schmitt, and if I could make him well again by staying out my three years, I'd do it gladly."

"I am sure you would, Otto."

"Of course. But, as it is, we must hope that his going away will be good for him and good for me too. For I have a plan in my head,—a kind of floating notion, and if I can carry it out——"

"You must wish very strong, Otto," put in Liese, with a little sly smile and a momentary raising of her chestnut eyebrows. Otto yielded to an irresistible temptation. He took little Liese's small form in his arms and kissed her lips. "Otto!" she gasped out, trying to release herself, and blushing crimson from brow to chin, "Otto!"

Otto released her waist from his encircling arm, but held her hand between his two hands, which he pressed against his breast with a penitent gesture. "Don't be angry, Lieschen," he whispered, bending his head down to her little burning ear, "don't be angry, you told me to wish very strong!"

"But I didn't mean——" began Liese indignantly, and then stopped short in confusion.

"Come, Lieschen, herzens liebchen, you know I wouldn't offend you for all the world. And you know too that I love you, dear Lieschen, and have loved you ever since we were children together. Don't you know it, darling?"

No answer came. Two bright tears rolled down Liese's flushed cheeks, and suddenly taking her hand from between his, she threw the checked apron she wore completely over her head and face, and dropped into a wooden settle by the hearth. Otto came and sat down beside her. "Now, Lieschen," he said in a broken agitated voice, "that is not kind of you to hide yourself from me in that way. I love you so much, so much, Lieschen, that I couldn't but hope you would love me a little." A stifled sob was heard beneath the comical shelter little Liese had devised for herself; but no articulate sound came forth from behind the checked apron. "Liese! I couldn't have believed you would be cruel. Not a word, not a look in answer! Don't you,—don't you love me a little, Liese?" Slowly the apron was drawn down over the shining brown braids of hair, which it ruffled in its passage,—drawn down low enough to show a strip of fair forehead, and a faint monosyllable was breathed into Otto's impatient ears.

"No."

"No! Ach, Lieschen!"

Again the apron was pulled very slowly over the chestnut eyebrows, and the tear-stained eyes, and the delicate little nose, and the innocent mouth; pulled down from brow to chin, until Liese's face was all revealed, and in trembling heart-felt tones she murmured, "No, Otto, not a little; I love you with all my heart!" And then she clasped her arms around his neck, and nestled her head down upon his breast, with the confiding, innocently loving gesture of a child. Otto held her to his heart for a while in silence. Presently he took her drooping head between his hands, and, raising it, looked into her eyes.

"Ach, Lieschen, wicked little Lieschen! to say 'no' at first."

"But you didn't believe me, Otto!"

"Well, herzchen, I did hope you would love me, because, you see, we had grown up together, as it were, and we were both orphans, and we always used to come to each other when we stood in need of a soft word or a kind look. So I did think it was natural you should love me; that's the truth."

"But oh, Otto!" exclaimed Lieschen, opening her brown eyes very wide, as though she saw something that terrified her, "oh, Otto! what will they say?"

"Who are 'they,' mein schatz?"

"The Herr Küster, and Frau von Schleppers, and Cousin Hanne." Liese did not doubt what Cousin Franz would say, if he could be left to follow the promptings of his heart.

"As to Frau von Schleppers, I don't see what she has to do with the matter. I hope Uncle Schnarcher and Frau Lehmann will say what they ought to say. But any way, Lieschen, you must not let yourself be frightened, or scolded, or cajoled out of loving me."

"Why, Otto! do you think anybody could do that? You ought not even to think of such a thing."

"No, darling, I ought not, and in truth I do not. But what I meant was that you must not allow yourself to be frightened into giving me up. We are pledged to each other now, Lieschen. I will be true to you as long as I live; and you will be steadfast and true to me; won't you, my own dearest?"

"Yes, Otto, I will." The words were uttered quite simply, but there was a solemnity and resolution in Liese's eyes as she spoke, which Otto had never seen in them before.

"Thanks, heart's thanks, my own true love. Now I must tell you my plans, or rather my hopes. You are to be my little wife, you know, Lieschen, and we must consult together. First of all, when I go to Horn to-morrow, I shall tell Uncle Schnarcher that you are my betrothed, and that I shall never marry any one but you."

"Oh, Otto!"

"Don't tremble so, you silly little bird! You were so brave just now. There. Well, as I was saying, I shall tell my uncle that good news,—the best I ever had to tell,—and I shall say to him that since I am thrown out of employment by Herr Schmitt's going away, and have my living to seek, I mean to apply for a situation as one of the prince's Jägers. Should you like that, Lieschen?"

"Yes; I should like it very much, Otto ——"

"Say 'dear Otto,' won't you?"

"Very much, dear Otto. But do you think the Herr Küster would like it? He is rather proud, you know,—of course, being so respected, and so—so old. At least, I don't mean that he is proud exactly because he's old. But he is used to have his own way. And your father was head-ranger, you know, Otto; and I'm afraid Herr Schnarcher will think that for you to be only a Jäger would be a coming down, like." Otto was not without misgivings on his own part, but he set himself to encourage Liese. If he could but bring his case under the Prince's notice, he thought his highness would surely show him some kindness for the sake of his father, the late head-ranger.

Yes; little Liese thought that likely enough. Otto spoke also of the rumoured departure of the Von Grolls, and the consequent promotion of the Justizrath. He, Otto, built greatly on this change for the bettering of his own fortunes. Major von Groll was unpopular in Detmold, but Lawyer von Schleppers was much the reverse. Did not Liese think that the Justizrath would say a good word for Otto to the Prince if he had the power to do so? Liese hesitated.

"Every one speaks well of the Justizrath, Liese," said Otto; "but you who live in his house ought to know best what sort of a man he is in reality. Is he not a kind master?"

"Y—yes," said Liese slowly.

"And a just man? And a faithful servant to his highness?"

"Oh yes; yes, Otto; the Herr Justizrath is a good man, of course. He must be. Yes; I am quite sure he is. But——"

"But what, Lieschen?"

"Well, you asked me, Otto, and I must say what I think; mustn't I?"

"Say what you think?" echoed Otto, in a tone of as much surprise as though one had asked him whether walking on one's feet were not preferable to walking on one's hands. "To be sure, herzchen, always say what you think."

"Well then, Otto, I must confess that I always,—somehow,—mistrust the Justizrath."

"Mistrust him, my Lieschen? For what reason?"

"No reason, Otto; it's only a feeling."

Otto looked grave.

"Oh, I dare say I am quite wrong, dear Otto. Please don't think any more about it. You know how foolishly frightened of people I am sometimes, without any real reason at all." Otto had been about to assume the responsibilities of his new position as Liese's affianced, and to lecture her about the injustice of harbouring mistrust and suspicion "without any real reason at all." But on looking downward with a somewhat stern expression at the little head which still nestled on his shoulder, his eyes encountered Liese's, upraised beseechingly, and he changed his mind, and kissed her forehead instead."

"Well, Lieschen," he said, "I shall speak to the Justizrath, nevertheless, the very first chance I get. And I think that when he hears about my father, and the way he died,—I think, I say, that the Justizrath will help me."

Liese started up, and looked at the kitchen clock. "You must go now, Otto," she exclaimed; "it is half-past eight o'clock. Mistress is at Frau von Groll's. She goes there nearly every night now,—and master is spending the evening at the Blue Pigeon as usual; but he will go to the major's to fetch mistress before nine. I expect them both every moment. Do go, dear Otto."

"It seems so hard to be hurried off before I have had time to say a word to you, Lieschen!"

"Why, Otto, we have been talking here more than an hour!"

"Have we? Well, I have not said half that I came to say. I wanted to tell you all about my new-found relation, and a hundred other things. But you are right,—I must go. I gave my word to Gottlieb to be back before nine. Good night, treasure of my heart."

Do you know, I can hardly believe that you have promised to be my wife, my own for evermore! It changes all the world for me so!"

"Good night, mein bester Otto. Shall you,—shall you see cousin Franz at Horn to-morrow? But I won't ask you any more questions. You must go."

"Yes, liebchen; I am going. Let me look at your sweet face once more. So."

"No, no, Otto. You must go now;—now, this very minute. I tremble to think of their finding you here."

"But they must know sooner or later, darling."

"Yes, yes; but then I shall tell mistress myself,—of my own accord,—and that will be different. But to have you found here, like some one who had stolen in like a thief——! Oh, do go, Otto, if you love me." For one instant he clasped her in his arms, and the two young guileless hearts were pressed together. Then he fairly ran down the passage, opened the heavy door, and issued forth into the bleak night.

But had it been a tepid perfume-laden breeze from Armida's garden, instead of the hungry wind raging landward from the Baltic, which saluted Otto's face as he turned away from the Justizrath's door, he could not have looked more thoroughly enchanted than he did. His eyes beamed, his cheeks glowed, and his mouth shaped itself into a dreamy smile;—an expression very rare on his face. Lieschen loved him! Dear, gentle, modest, true-hearted little Lieschen was his promised bride. Doubts and fears!—pooh!—no such things existed any longer. Nothing could go ill since Lieschen loved him. Wild visions that he had sometimes cherished when a child, of running away into the heart of the forest, and there building a safe retreat where he and Lieschen might dwell alone together, flitted through his memory. He laughed softly as he thought of these boyish fancies, but somehow they did not seem all impossible now. It appeared to him that all wildly beautiful and happy things had become possible; and if the old Kindermärchen had suddenly been realised before him, and Lieschen had begun to drop pearls, and diamonds, and roses out of her pretty mouth on to the floor of the Justizrath's kitchen, Otto believed that it would all have appeared quite natural, and according to the usual course of events.

For Lieschen loved him! And what fairy story that has ever been said or sung could surpass the magical enchantment of that delicious fact?

As he passed the leafless hedge, with a step even more swift and buoyant than usual, he brushed against some one crouching down beneath its scanty shelter. "Lieber Himmel! Cousin Joachim, is that you? What, in the name of all that's wonderful, makes you stay there in this bitter windy night?" Otto was not too much engrossed by his own happiness to be aware of the fact that for

ordinary mortals, whom Liese was not in love with, the weather was decidedly inclement.

"I have waited to see you. I don't mind the wind or the cold. I'm used to them. Tell me, who is she? Who is the maiden I saw in yonder house?"

"The maiden in yonder house! Was zum teufel! Cousin Joachim, what makes you so anxious to know?"

"No matter; only answer me, Otto. I pray you to answer me! Who is she? What is her name?"

"Her name is Elizabeth,—usually called Liese,—Lehmann."

"Lehmann?"

"Yes; she is a relation of Franz Lehmann, the farmer at Horn, and is in service here in Detmold. I have known her nearly all her life. And now that I have satisfied your curiosity, perhaps you will answer my question, and tell me why you take such a strange interest in the maiden?"

The charcoal-burner heaved a long quivering sigh. "Ach Gott!" he exclaimed hoarsely, "she is so like,—so like some one I knew long, long ago. With being so much alone, my head gets hold of strange fancies at times. When I first saw her face with the light shining on it, I took her for a spirit from another world."

"Well, she is beautiful enough to be an angel,—Heaven bless her!—and good enough too. But you must not fall in love with her, Cousin Joachim, for I will let you into a secret;—she is my betrothed bride."

CHAPTER XVII.

STRANGE WAYFARERS IN HORN.

On the 24th of March, 1866, Prussia forwarded a circular dispatch to the minor German States, setting forth her differences with Austria.

All Europe felt the oppression of the coming storm. The thunder-clouds which had long been darkening the political sky began to send forth pale, brief flashes, and to mutter ominously. Throughout Germany the excitement was intense, although, for the present, in great part suppressed. The people waited panting in the sulphurous atmosphere, and the lightning drew nearer, and the clouds grew blacker, and the thunder rolled louder day by day.

On the 7th of April Austria demanded the demobilization of the Prussian forces.

In the district that includes the principalities of Lippe-Detmold and Waldeck, and sundry neighbouring lands, one chief cause of excitement was the departure of bands of young men to enrol themselves in the Prussian army. Recruiting went on vigorously,—some said secretly. But the amount of secrecy cannot have been great, since

every man, woman, and child in the two principalities was talking about it. Amongst the fortunate Lippe-Detmolders the recruiting agents had small chance of doing much. In Lippe-Detmold there were no taxes. That eloquent sentence conveys all that need be said on the subject in these pages. But Lippe-Detmold had neighbour-lands that were not so blest. In Waldeck, for example, there was much discontent and a good deal of poverty. The peasants would tell you, with touching simplicity and good faith, that their august ruler was very good. Oh yes; he was good and kind-hearted, and would never oppress the poor. But he had bad servants under him,—hard, unjust stewards, who ground the people down. As to the Prince,—if they could only let him know their grievances, they would soon be redressed: but,—bless you!—the Prince was away in Vienna, or some place at the other end of the world! Patriotism or enthusiasm for a United Germany had very little to do with it, but, nevertheless, the fact was, that Prussia found many accessions to her armies in tiny Waldeck; and numbers of these recruits passed through Horn on their way southward.

The knot of old cronies that still gathered nightly in the hostelry of the Pied Lamb had to yield so far to the resistless current of fact, as to discuss the portentous events that were happening. Every day brought fresh tidings of moment. Night after night the landlord and the sacristan sat opposite to each other with grave faces,—Schnarcher's gaunt, hard, and savage; Quendel's broad, fat, and solemn. Schnarcher seemed to protest, in every fibre of his lean frame, against the course of events. Quendel opposed only his ponderous immobility to the current. Peters sank lower than ever in the opinion of his old friends. They could not divest themselves of a suspicion that contemporary history was justifying the apothecary in a good many theories and opinions which he had propounded during the past year; and this naturally hardened their hearts against him. It is not so very difficult to excuse a man for being wrong; but it is sometimes terribly hard to forgive him for being right.

The sacristan's temper was especially exacerbated by the sight of parties of burschen, who would stop occasionally to refresh themselves at the Pied Lamb or the humbler alehouse on the other side of the main street, as they tramped through Horn; and many were the derisive and cutting remarks that fell from the old man's lips. Even Quendel, in whose huge bulk the landlord instinct was alive and active, sometimes shook his head deprecatingly at some bitter outburst of the old sacristan's displeasure; and would make a clumsy attempt to convey in an aside to his beer-consuming customers that the Herr Küster's sentiments were not entirely shared by him, the host of the Pied Lamb. These attempts invariably resulted, it is true, in drawing down upon his own head the vials of Simon Schnarcher's wrath; for the old sacristan was a great deal too keen not to perceive his friend's

double dealing. But Qnendel bore any amount of scolding and abuse from the sacristan with an unmoved mind. Indeed, he appeared rather to enjoy the exhibition of his old crony's energy and scorn, so long as such scorn was let off by means of the safety-valve of personal vituperation directed against himself. Come what might, Simon Schnarcher would continue to drink his beer and smoke his pipe in the Speise-Saal of the Pied Lamb every evening so long as he should be able to hobble thither at all. But chance customers were liable to take offence and walk off to the rival alehouse.

When Otto walked into his uncle's house at Horn on the morning which succeeded his interview with Liese, he found no one in the room on the ground-floor, which served as parlour, kitchen, and dining-saloon, except old Sophie. His uncle was out, she said, at the Herr Pastor's. There had been a christening that morning at St. Mary's. Had Otto come to Horn about the letter which had arrived that morning from Herr Schmitt? Ach Himmel! the Herr Küster was finely put out about it! In truth, he was put out about most things lately. The world was going on a queer road, thought Sophie. Otto did not care to stay and listen to the old woman's grumblings, which were but an echo of the sacristan's. Besides, he was eager to disburden his mind of the serious disclosure he had to make to his uncle, and he did not desire to be damped and discouraged by Sophie's lugubrious account of how much the Herr Küster had been "put out" lately.

Otto asked for a glass of beer and a crust of brown bread; and having taken this modest refreshment after his walk, he went out again to stroll through the little town, where almost every living creature, including the dogs and the horses, was his personal acquaintance. "I will be back again before my uncle returns, Sophie," he said.

"Ganz gut. The Herr Küster will be at home to his dinner at twelve o'clock. Nay, you may chance to meet him coming from the pastor's house."

Horn was not a place whose outward aspect varied very much or very often. Otto felt almost surprised to find everything in the same state as he remembered it when a school-boy. Not that that period was so very remote, but changes had taken place in himself. A great deal had happened to Otto since yesterday; nothing, apparently, had happened to Horn during the last ten years.

He strolled on, exchanging a nod or a warmer greeting with various acquaintances as he passed up the broad main street, but not stopping to get into conversation with any one, until he came to where the houses grew rarer, and the gardens wider, and Lehmann's farm came into view. Its vast steep barn-roof shone red in the morning sunshine, and was a conspicuous object even among the other towering edifices of the like kind which skirted the road.

Otto knew that farmer Franz would in all probability be lounging about the homestead at this hour, and as he drew nearer, he saw Lehmann's tall figure in the farmyard.

Otto called out a greeting while he was still at some distance from his old friend, and the farmer turned towards him with a face of pleased surprise. "Come in, lad, come in. Mind the duck-pond, and don't tread on the old dog's tail; he's purblind now, poor beast. Well, Otto, and what brings you to Horn betimes in the forenoon? Come to see your uncle, eh?"

"Yes, Herr Lehmann; I had some business to talk over with him. How is your good Haus-fran?"

Lehmann's face fell a little, and the sparkle went out of his blue eyes. "Hanne's well and hearty, thank ye, Otto; well and hearty is my old woman; and,—and busy,—very busy. The fact is, lad, it's washing-day with my old woman, so I,—I just came down here to have a look at the pigs. They're thriving most amazing; only look at the beauties."

The science of pig-culture had not made very great progress in Detmold; or, at all events, it had not extended its blessing to Franz Lehmann's farm. The animals he contemplated with such fond approval would have made but a sorry figure at Baker Street. The discovery that the pig is an animal which loves and thrives on the daintiest cleanliness was far from the farmer's mind; and, in fact, his pigs were ill-built, long-legged, black-bristled, ugly beasts enough. But they had certain grand porcine peculiarities which distinguish the race everywhere. They wallowed languidly in the filthy mud which covered the sty, or grubbed with greedy snouts in the well-filled trough. One very large fat creature, that had evidently gorged itself to repletion, lay stretched on its side in such a manner as to command a view of the trough out of which the others were still feeding, and blinked with one half-opened eye languishingly upward at the rich dainties, giving vent every now and then to a muffled grunt that was almost rapturous in its expression of satisfied gluttony.

Lehmann gazed down pensively into the sty. "Ah, thrive they do, most amazingly!" said he, softly. "Nice creatures, ain't they?"

"Well, yes; I suppose they are, of their kind. But I have no particular fancy for them. They're greedy, dirty, lazy beasts, I always think."

"Ah! there's a deal of comfort in pigs, though; so easy-going; do such credit to their keep; never want scrubbing, or scouring, or grooming. Give 'em their bellies full, and there ain't peacefuller, comfortabler creatures in the world. You're too young to understand it yet awhile, Otto. But sometime or other,—when you're married and settled,—and when"—added the farmer, with a movement of the corners of his mouth which began as though it meant to be a smile,

but stopped short of it—"when its washing-day, you'll understand the comfort there is in pigs."

Otto laughed. Then his face grew grave again. "When I'm married, farmer Lehmann!" he exclaimed, with a little sigh.

"Yes, to be sure. You will be married some day. Most folks are. The Lord only knows why the half of them do marry. But I suppose it's all for the best." Then the farmer asked Otto how he got on in Detmold, and what was the news there; and the young man told him of Herr Schmitt's approaching departure, and how he,—Otto,—had once more a place to seek in the world. They spoke, too, about the rumoured retirement of Major von Groll from the land-stewardship; and Otto confided to his friend his intention of applying to the Justizrath von Schleppers, and his hope that that benevolent old gentleman would assist him.

Franz Lehmann was not one of those who swelled the chorus of the Justizrath's praises. He had, indeed, imbibed a strong prejudice against the lawyer. But he thought and said that he saw no reason why von Schleppers should refuse to lay Otto's case before the Prince. And if that were done, Lehmann believed that his highness would surely give Otto a good post at once,—something better than a mere Jäger's place, the farmer thought; for every one knew that the Prince had liked and valued Head-ranger Hemmerich. Franz Lehmann's friendly words of encouragement warmed Otto's heart, and in his open impetuous way, almost before he had thought in his own mind how he should make the disclosure, he poured out to the farmer all the story of his love for Liese, and how she had promised to be his, and to be true to him, and to love him always, and how they both hoped that "Cousin Franz," who had been Lieschen's loving benefactor from her babyhood, would approve of their attachment, and give his consent that they should be betrothed.

"Softly, lad, softly!" cried Lehmann, putting his hand over his eyes. "You fairly take my breath away!" Then, after a moment, he seized Otto's hand and shook it heartily, saying that he had always loved him from a boy, and that he knew no one to whose care he would more gladly entrust little Lieschen.

"God bless you, Herr Lehmann. You make me very happy!"

"Ay, ay, but there is much to be said first. I doubt you and Lieschen are but a couple of children that don't look beyond the day. Have you spoken to the sacristan yet on the subject?"

"No; he was from home. But I am going back now to Horn, and I shall tell him all." Lehmann shook his head. He did not encourage Otto to expect a very favourable answer from his uncle. There were various circumstances which led him to fear that the sacristan would disapprove of such a match,—circumstances of which, perhaps, Otto was ignorant, but which must be explained to him before he bound himself irrevocably to marry Liese. In the first place, she would

have no money, or next to none. The farm would pass, after the death of Franz Lehmann and his wife, to a distant relative of the former. That had all been settled long ago by the will of Lehmann's grandfather. Had Franz had a son, the farm would have descended to him. As it was, he,—Lehmann,—had no power to bequeath a rood of the land to Liese. There were other circumstances which it was right Otto should know.

Otto broke in impatiently,—“Um Gottes willen! dear Lehmann; say no more! Money! Do you think that if my darling could come to me covered with gold and jewels, I should love her or value her one grain the more? You have said the only words I wished or cared to hear,—namely, that you are willing to trust me with the dear maiden. What else matters to me, or to Lieschen? When my uncle knows that you have given your consent he cannot withhold his own. Besides, I can work. I am strong and young. Don't shake your head and look grave, mein bester Freund. All will be well. I feel it. I must hasten back to Horn now. If I had time, I would go in and salute Frau Hanne, and ask her to say a kind word to me on my betrothal, but——”

“Ach behüte! Thou, dear Heaven, how hot-headed these boys and girls are! Go in to speak to Hanne now? Why it's as much as I shall dare to venture inside the house for my dinner. Ach-h-h! you don't know what washing-day means. I shall just stay quietly here and think matters over. I'm a slow-witted man, Otto; and I don't take in new ideas so easy as some. I require time and a good long pull at my pipe to set my thoughts in order.”

Otto wrung the farmer's honest hand, and set off running in the direction of the sacristan's house. Once at a turn of the road he stopped for a moment and looked back. Franz Lehmann was leaning with folded arms on the wooden fence of the pig-sty; and Otto said to himself laughingly, “I hope he does find some comfort in his pigs, the good farmer! Ah, a shrewish wife is a sore cross to bear. Now my Lieschen is so sweet-natured and gentle!”

As Otto came near the Pied Lamb on his way down the main street, he saw a little knot of persons assembled close to the inn. Quendel stood at the open door of his hostelry, whence five men, poorly dressed, dusty, and travel-stained, had just emerged. At one or two windows on the opposite side of the way heads were to be seen. The blacksmith had come out of his forge to see, and the horse-faced man who kept the “general shop” had paused in the act of serving a customer, and was staring stolidly across the half-door of his shop. The travellers pursued their way with the resolute air of men who had yet many a mile to tramp, and the denizens of Horn watched them in silence.

“Good morning, Herr Quendel,” said Otto, stopping for a moment at the door of the Pied Lamb.

"Morning, Otto. You're not going to join that distinguished party, are you?"

"Not I. Who are they, and where are they journeying too? They haven't the look of Handwerksburschen."

"Nothing so respectable. As to who they are, I don't know anything except that they come out of Waldeck. As to where they are going,—well, least said, soonest mended, perhaps. But I don't mind telling you,"—here Quendel subdued his harsh base voice to a whisper that reminded one of the preliminary hoarse wheezing sometimes to be heard in the pipes of an organ when the bellows begin to move, and before the fingers of the player have touched the keys,—“I don't mind telling you, that they're recruits going to join the Prussian army."

"Ach so!" cried Otto, turning to look after the men with increased interest. "Well, as things are, perhaps they couldn't do better."

"I am sorry to hear the Herr Küster's nephew make such a speech," said Quendel with grave rebuke. Then when Otto was half-way down the street, and the little knot of idlers had dispersed, the landlord relieved his overcharged feelings by a string of sonorous oaths. "Couldn't do better, quotha! Hol' mich der henker if I know what they could do worse!"

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE SACRISTAN'S BAN.

Otto had delayed so long at the farm talking to Franz Lehmann that when he reached his uncle's house, he found the early dinner at an end, and the sacristan seated in his great leathern chair by the stove.

"Ei, du lieber Himmel!" exclaimed Sophie querulously. "Here is Otto, and the dinner all cleared away! Sieh' mal! Of course the boy wants food. You may take your oath of that, Herr Küster."

Simon Schnarcher looked up at his nephew over his horn-rimmed spectacles. He had been reading a letter, which he still held open in his hand, and which Otto recognised as the letter that Herr Schmitt had written the previous day. "Good morning, uncle. How goes it with you?"

"How goes it?" growled the sacristan, contemptuously shrugging his stooping shoulders. "Bah! It goes badly. Badly, badly, I tell you."

"I am heartily sorry, uncle. Yet you look well; better than when I saw you last."

"Look at this. Of course you know all about this precious epistle. I got it this morning."

"I do know of it. It is the reason of my being here."

"Perhaps," said the sacristan, taking off his spectacles and looking up at Otto with a ray of satisfaction shining out of the depths of his

cavernous eyes, "perhaps you have come here to complain to me about it, eh?"

"Here's some hot soup, and bread and fresh butter, and a bit of bratwurst. And now sit down and get some food into you before you begin to talk to the Herr Küster," said old Sophie, placing on the table the good things she had enumerated. Otto sat down, nothing loath, and began to eat and drink. Meanwhile Sophie dexterously filled the sacristan's meerschaum, which she put within reach of his hand. Then she placed herself close to the window, and commenced darning a blue knitted stocking with coarse worsted of a totally different shade of colour.

Simon Schnarcher looked on silently whilst Otto appeased his keen appetite. In his secret heart the old man was glad to see the lad again. It was pleasant to look at his bright face and to hear his voice; and, above all, to trace in the expression of his clear eyes a resemblance to that long-dead sister Dorothea, with whom,—according to the sacristan,—had died out the race of good women. He liked that Sophie should minister to his nephew's wants, and make much of him in her half-grudging manner, which deceived nobody. "Well," said Schnarcher, when Otto had finished his meal, and came and stood opposite to his uncle by the stove,—“well, I suppose you don't find this business much more to your liking than I do.”

"I am right grieved for Herr Schmitt, uncle——"

"Right grieved for Herr Schmitt, quotha! Keep a little of your grief for yourself;—and for me, who deserve it most of all! Herr Schmitt, indeed!"

"Well, but, lieber Onkel, after all, it is neither you nor I that is sick and obliged to go away out of our own fatherland, you know."

"O Lord, O Lord!—nothing but years gives a man wisdom."

Sophie, from her distant seat by the window, endorsed this dictum by a long groaning ejaculation of "Ach-h-h! so!"

"Don't you see, simpleton," pursued the sacristan, angrily, "that we are the sufferers? You somewhat, but I chiefly; for now I shall have to go through all the bother and worry and trouble of finding a place for you over again."

"Perhaps not, uncle," put in Otto, eagerly catching at the chance thus offered to him of revealing his own plans; "perhaps not. I hope I shall be able to find something for myself this time."

Schnarcher wrinkled up his yellow face into an expression of derisive contempt. "Shall you, indeed?" said he. "That is as it may be. But for Schmitt!—I'm astonished at him;—disgusted and astonished! To treat an old friend like me in this way, and be established in the same business and in the same shop over thirty year!"

"But, uncle," pleaded Otto, who felt in all loyalty impelled to

bear witness in his master's favour, "uncle, it is true, indeed. The doctor says so. Herr Schmitt is sick even to danger."

"Sick!" echoed the sacristan, and then spat noisily into a tin bowl full of sawdust that stood beside the stove. "Sick! Ugh! And what makes him sick? What business has he to be sick when he has promised me to keep you and teach you his trade for three years? Look at me! Am I too sick to do my duty? And I was seventy-nine last Pentecost."

The old man was getting more and more irritated. It vexed him terribly that Otto should have come there prepared to excuse Herr Schmitt's delinquency, and to treat the whole matter as by no means a misfortune to himself. The sacristan did not choose to have anything made light of, or smoothed over, that he had made up his mind to consider as a serious annoyance, requiring all his wisdom and experience and resolution to meet. Otto tried to speak to him, and to relate what he had come to Horn expressly to say. But the sacristan peremptorily bade him hold his tongue. "It's all mighty easy for you, no doubt," said Schnarcher; "but, as the weight of the business will fall on me, I must consider of it a little." With that he puffed a dense cloud out of his meerschauß, and, leaning back in his chair, remained quite silent and motionless for some ten minutes.

Otto fidgeted about the room, glancing impatiently at his uncle from time to time; and once he attempted to begin a whispered conversation by the window with Sophie. But the latter frowningly shook her head, and held up her finger, as one would check a troublesome child. Otto could not help smiling. "They both forget that I am more than twelve years old," thought he.

At length the sacristan turned his head and desired Otto to come near to him once more. "See now, Herr Otto! What you found so very smooth and easy has cost me all this time hard thinking and calculating to decide upon; and I believe my head is considered to be as good as another's. Listen——"

"One moment, uncle! Would it not be well to let me say what I have to say first? And I was to give you a message from Herr Schmitt, to ask you to go over to Detmold and speak with him, and——"

"Be silent, sir, I say! Was zum teufel! Things are coming to a pretty pass!"

"Oh, Herr Küster!" cried Sophie, shocked at the unbecoming ejaculation from the sacristan's mouth.

"Let me alone, Sophie. Listen, Otto, and heed what I say. As you were not bound 'prentice regularly to Schmitt,—being, indeed, too old already for that before I changed my mind about making you a pastor,—I cannot get any compensation from him for throwing you overboard. But I shall not let him go away without telling him my

mind. Now of course I can't have you idling about at home here without earning your bread. Don't interrupt. I don't say you want to be idle. Any way, idle folks don't suit me. So I have been thinking that there is a respectable man in Schnitt's line of business at Lemgo, who would be glad to oblige me. And I shall,—if matters turn out well on inspection,—place you in his shop for a time. By-and-by,—who knows?—I may scrape together a few kreutzers to buy you a share in a business on your own account. That is, if you are steady and dutiful, and give satisfaction. So!" The sacristan leaned back in his chair, with the air of one who had just pronounced an indisputable fiat. But he felt some latent, uneasy doubt of Otto's acquiescence, and furtively watched him out of the corner of his eye.

Otto perceived that a struggle was imminent between his will and that of his uncle. He earnestly desired to avoid bitter words or harsh reproaches on either side;—desired it all the more that he feared the reception of what he had to say about Lehmann's Liese would not be gracious. Nevertheless, he began, with straightforward courage, to unfold his project of obtaining a situation as Jäger in the Prince's service. He mentioned the rumoured promotion of the Justizrath von Schleppers to the land-stewardship, and expressed his hope that the kind old lawyer might be induced to say a good word for him to his highness. Otto warmed into a hopeful, almost enthusiastic tone as he spoke, and allowed his sanguine temperament to lead him on to the building of certain air-castles. Meanwhile the sacristan sat still and watchful in his great chair, and allowed no trace of emotion to escape him, save the deepening lines which surrounded his compressed mouth, and the unusual rapidity with which puff followed puff from his meerschäum.

"Have you quite finished, sir?" asked the old man, in a harsh, snarling tone, when Otto paused.

"There is something else I want to say to you, uncle; but I should be glad to know, first, that you don't altogether set your face against my trying this new place. A Jäger's life is just suited to me. I can earn my bread at it thoroughly and honestly. I have tried the other just to please you, and because I thought you took it so to heart my not being a pastor, after sending me to Halle and all. But you see, uncle, I am not fit for a tradesman, and Herr Schmitt will tell you so himself!" Foolish Otto! Schnarcher's deep-set, black eyes sparkled angrily. He chose,—as we have seen,—invariably to assume that Otto's relinquishment of the clerical calling had been due to his,—the sacristan's,—changing his mind, and had in nowise been carried out in spite of him. Foolish Otto!

"Oh, indeed, sir! Herr Schmitt seems to have done you a great deal of good, and to have put very pretty notions into your head, I must say. But let me hear the rest of what you came to say to me.

There was something else, I believe, you mentioned,—that is, if you think it worth while to take me into your confidence."

"I do think it worth while, dear uncle. I never yet deceived you in word or deed, and I should like you to listen kindly to what I have to tell you." Otto paused here in the hope of some encouraging response, even though it were but a look. But the sacristan remained inflexibly still, and made no sign.

Otto proceeded;—"You know, uncle, I am close upon three-and-twenty years old now, and it is but natural that I should think seriously of the future, and begin to act for myself a little, especially since,—since there is now another person for me to think for and act for." Although Simon Schnarcher did not move or turn his eyes towards Otto, the latter felt that his uncle was startled, and that he listened with increased attention. Something in the tension of the lean, yellow fingers with which the old man clutched the arm of his chair, and in the absolute immobility of his attitude, conveyed this impression. "The truth is, dear uncle, I have fallen in love. And yet that hardly seems to be the right word, either, for I have loved her ever since she was a little, tiny child. And, uncle, she is so sweet and good! And we have been fond of each other nearly all of our lives. I hope you will like her, and give your consent to our betrothal."

The sacristan broke silence in a queer suppressed voice. "Perhaps it may be well to find out whether the maiden's parents give their consent, and to inform me,—if I may make so bold as to ask it,—what is the name of the damsel."

"Oh, as to the maiden's parents, poor child! they are both dead. But the good man who stands in place of a father to her, is willing to trust me with his treasure."

"A treasure, eh?" sneered Schnarcher, still in the same queer tone. "Come; you are lucky! I didn't know that there were any great fortunes going a-begging in these parts."

"Great fortunes, uncle? No, no. You don't understand. How should she have any fortune? I thought you would know who my darling was, without telling, almost. It is Liese Lehmann, uncle. Dear little Lieschen; bless her!"

"So! And the farmer, you say, is willing to trust you with this,—this treasure? How generous! And you have been very wise and prudent in settling all the matter before speaking to me. Yes, yes; then, you know, you had but to tell Uncle Schnarcher what you and your friends had decided upon, and, of course, Uncle Schnarcher would—act accordingly."

"Nay, uncle, indeed I meant to tell you first, before speaking a word to any one. But, meanwhile, I came across Franz Lehmann, and somehow, when we began talking together, out it all came. The farmer is so true-hearted and kind! And, of course, I don't expect

to go and be married straight off at once. I know we must wait a bit until I can get straight in the world, and see my way. But if you and Farmer Franz will only give your consent, uncle,—why, I shall work with twice the will and courage ! ”

Then at last burst forth the sacristan's long-suppressed anger and disappointment. He flew into a rage so violent that his wrinkled face flushed almost purple, and his hands shook until the pipe he held fell from his trembling fingers on the hearthstone, and was smashed to pieces. He stormed at first with such voluble fury as to be almost incoherent. He reviled Otto, and the farmer, and Herr Schmitt, and,—worst of all,—Liese ; designating the latter as a vile, designing, base-born minx, who had bewitched Otto with her doll's face, as his father had been bewitched before him. It was not enough that Otto, with the low peasant instincts he had inherited from his mother, should waste all the advantages of the education his uncle had given him, and prefer the obscure position of a huntsman to the honourable and reverend calling of a pastor ;—it was not enough that he should be so obstinate, or so stupid, or so lazy,—or all three at once,—as to profit nothing by the months he had passed behind Schmitt's counter in Detmold ;—all this was not bad enough, but he must crown his misdeeds by engaging himself to a little penniless servant wench, who came from nobody knew whence, and who was believed by all the neighbours to be a bastard deserted by her parents, and kept, out of charity, at the farm.

The sound of his own voice seemed to infuriate the old man more and more, and he raved on, heaping words of abuse upon Otto, upon Liese, and upon the memory of Otto's mother, until old Sophie,—who had vainly tried to stem the torrent of his wrath,—put her fingers into her ears, and sat quaking in her corner by the window. At length Schnarcher ceased, from sheer exhaustion and want of breath, and fell back in his chair, panting and glaring. Then Otto spoke. He was quite pale even to the lips, but as he spoke the colour mounted and burnt in a fiery spot upon each cheek.

“ Simon Schnarcher,” he said very slowly, and as though his words cost him a strong effort to utter with any measure of composure, “ once before, years ago, when I was a mere child, you dared to cast something like a reproach upon the memory of my dear, dear mother. I told you then,—I remember it as though it had been yesterday,—that if you ever repeated such words, I would go away out of your presence and out of your house, though I had to beg my bread upon the high road. To-day you have not only repeated those reproaches, but you have heaped one vile word on another, until I have been ashamed for your white hairs. You have insulted and defamed the dead, and the poor helpless orphan who never injured or even offended you by word or deed. About your anger against myself, I say nothing. But for your abuse of my dead mother, and my pro-

mised wife,—my wife, I say,—I tell you that no tie of duty or gratitude can oblige me to bear that, nor to remain another moment under your roof."

"Mighty well, sir," gasped the sacristan, "mighty well, indeed! Thankless and stubborn you always were, and nothing but my system of training would have kept you from the gallows as long as this. As to your fine speeches about leaving my house, you may spare yourself the trouble of making any more of 'em. The grapes are sour. If you persist in saddling yourself with this beggarly, artful young hussy, neither you nor yours shall ever be the better for a kreutzer of my money, I promise you. Beg your bread on the highways! A deal likelier to turn robber on the highways. But you may beg, or starve, or rob, or hang, for what I care; or go and be shot by the Austrians,—that might suit your heroic vein. I wash my hands of you. Go!"

Otto turned towards the house-door without another word; but old Sophie, hobbling after him, caught him as his hand was on the latch. "O my boy, my Otto, stay a moment! Don't part like this. Herr Küster! Otto, think twice; give your anger time to cool. He was always a good boy, and a kind-hearted. Never hurt a fly. Oh, Otto!" And the poor old creature put her apron up to her eyes and whimpered.

"Don't fret, Sophie, don't fret!" said Otto, kindly. "I shall see you again, you know. God knows, my heart is heavy enough at the thought of parting in anger, but,—look, uncle!" he added, suddenly turning to the old man,—“I ask you nothing for myself, but if you will but call back the words you said of my mother and Lieschen,—tell me they were spoken in the heat of anger, and that you did not mean them,—I shall go away without enmity or bitterness against you. It might some day be a comfort to both of us to think that we parted in peace.” For one instant there seemed to be a struggle in the sacristan's mind. Sophie stood by breathless, with clasped hands.

Then the old man turned his shoulder towards his nephew, and bade him, with a savage oath, begone and trouble him no more. The lock clicked, the door closed; there was silence in the cottage, broken only by Sophie's sobs.

SPAIN UNDER ITS LAST BOURBON SOVEREIGN.

MISGOVERNMENT in Spain has long been a chronic, and seemingly an incurable, affliction. The Spaniards, whose Sancho Panza vein is copious and inveterate, who have a proverb or a humorous saying for every occasion, and who, not content to jest at scars, are witty upon their own open wounds, tell how their patron saint once implored the Deity to bestow upon their favoured land the choicest blessings. Brave men, lovely women, a brilliant sun, a teeming soil,—everything was granted, until at last the petitioner asked for a good Government. "Not that," was the reply; "for then the angels would fly from heaven to dwell in Spain." Even at a rather lower estimate of the qualities of Spaniards, and of the natural advantages of their country, their prosperity and progress ought to have been great but for the one drawback, the prevalence of bad government. To the vices, weaknesses, and superstitions of their sovereigns; to the incapacity, greed, and corruption of their public men, are to be attributed most of their misfortunes and sufferings in recent times. Notwithstanding the deficiency of education natural in a nation so long priest-ridden, the Spanish people, although not enlightened, possess generous instincts and high qualities. Down to the very lowest, they are proud both of themselves and of their country. As individuals, they are wanting neither in dignity nor in self-respect, neither in honour nor in patriotism. But if we extend our investigation to the higher classes, to those who take a part in public life, or aspire to do so; to the innumerable persons who make politics and Government employment the sole occupation and object of their existence and exertions, we get the reverse of the medal. If bad kings have been a prominent cause of Spain's poverty and degradation, unscrupulous ministers and shameful mal-administration have also done much to produce these ends. It were too much to affirm that all this has been brought to an end by the late revolution, which, after overthrowing so much, has as yet reconstructed so little. A great step has certainly been made by the expulsion of a sovereign who, in the long record of a reign of five-and-thirty years, can scarcely show a single act of good government, except during certain periods when she was queen only in name. The weariness of such a deplorable state of things at last became too grievous and universal to be longer endured. Spaniards of all classes had been made to feel the cruel yoke. The people could not bear to see their fortunes, their liberties, their very

lives, at the mercy of upstart adventurers, whom a Court intrigue and the pernicious influence of a camarilla oftentimes raised from obscurity to wealth and place, and to the highest honours and titles. In the present century no such spectacle has been afforded as that of the Court of Spain, and we must almost revert to the Middle Ages to match it in some respects. "The example of morality," an orator in the Italian Parliament exclaimed not long ago, with an emphasis and plainness that startled his auditory and gave sore offence in high places, "should proceed from above." In Spain, under several successive reigns, that example has been wanting. From Godoy to Marfori, there have been few breaks in the chain of intrigue and extravagance. The country has been plundered and the people have been oppressed, and the nation has felt itself degraded in the eyes of foreigners and in its own esteem. Still, this state of things had so long been borne with that Europe had almost come to believe it would never cease, and had ended by averting its gaze from the deplorable spectacle, and by losing all interest in a land which, in its early struggles for constitutional liberty, had commanded warm sympathy and generous aid. Only the oldest amongst us can now have personal recollection of the interest taken, in England especially, in those efforts for freedom which, successful for a time, were frustrated by foreign intervention. Spain, like Italy, had its days of glorification in the country where the love of liberty has become only the more deeply rooted by its long enjoyment. With the French Revolution of 1830 all danger of the intervention of foreign armies in Spanish domestic affairs may be said to have disappeared; and with the death, three years later, of the tyrant whom French troops had restored, a new era seemed to open for the long-oppressed peninsula. More fortunate in that respect than the sister country of Italy, no Spanish provinces formed part of a foreign empire; no temporal power, guarded in a sacred city by foreign troops, served as a focus and rallying point of absolutism and priestcraft. But the fetters which the Austrian and the Pope still kept fast riveted on Italian nationality and aspirations, were found, in the long run, less difficult to shake off than those with which internal divisions and the strife of parties continued to restrain the development and emancipation of Spain.

It would be impossible, within the necessary limits of this article, to give even an outline of the thirty-five years of modern Spanish history comprised between the death of Ferdinand VII. in 1833, and the deposition and flight of his daughter Isabella in 1868. On the king's decease, the hopes of the constitutional party in Spain centred, in great measure, on the supposed liberal tendencies of his widow Christina. Civil war immediately broke out, and the absolutist and clerical supporters of Don Carlos were powerfully aided by the hardy mountaineers of Biscay and Navarre, in arms to defend the privileges which they saw menaced by the constitutional

regimen it was sought to introduce. As has since been amply proved, Christina was no greater partisan than her husband or her brother of any other system of government than that of the "rey neto," or pure absolutism; but she was fain to raise the opposite banner, and, in the patriotic songs inspired by the enthusiasm of the time, her name was commonly coupled with the institutions which she little loved, and which, when once the Carlist cause was finally lost, she repeatedly showed her willingness to abolish.

"La que rompio las cadenas

Que oprimidos nos tenian

Reyna Gobernadora, Cristina de Borbon,"

sang the soldiers and national guards who took her name as their war-cry, and called themselves *Cristinos*. Compelled to rest upon the liberal party, which otherwise would have had no motive for supporting her infant daughter's somewhat dubious rights against the faction that denied the validity of Ferdinand's abolition of the *Salic* law, she was no Liberal in her heart, and, with Martinez de la Rosa and Toreno for her Prime Ministers, she made but very cautious and undecided steps in the desired direction until the military insurrection of La Granja forced her to accept the Constitution of 1812, afterwards modified and converted into what is known as the Constitution of 1837. The Constituent Cortes that elaborated it comprised all the distinguished Liberals then prominent in public life, many of whom are since dead; whilst others, like Salustiano Olózaga, then rising into fame as an orator and statesman, have lived to see it repeatedly trampled upon, and to aid in the downfall of the sovereign in whose name it was promulgated, and who swore to observe it when prematurely declared of age—she being then little more than thirteen years old—by a vote of the Cortes in 1843.

Before striding over a number of years to events much nearer to the present day, and more immediately bearing on the recent convulsion, let us here pause, in justice to a deposed sovereign, briefly to consider the circumstances that may be urged in extenuation of the misdeeds and misgovernment with which Isabella has justly been charged. If it be true that evil qualities are often transmitted from sire to son, and if an imperfect education may be pleaded in palliation of the indulgence of evil instincts, a strong case may be made out by the defenders of the ex-Queen of Spain. It is well known that her father was a bigot, treacherous, cruel, sensual,—as worthless a man as he was a thoroughly bad king. Ungrateful and vindictive, he was no sooner restored to his throne, in great measure by the power of British arms, in 1814, than he applied himself to the persecution of those Spaniards who had most distinguished themselves by their courage and patriotism in resistance to the French invader. Their cherished constitution was annulled, and the Inquisition,—that heritage of the Middle Ages,—was re-established. Europe stood

aghast at the ingratitude and the anachronism. Ferdinand was a king whom none could love or trust, and who reigned only by terror. Of his third wife and widow, Christina, little need be said. She came of no good stock, and was as remarkable for her dissimulation as was her husband. Her infatuation for the handsome guardsman, Muñoz, gave her enemies a handle against her which was unsparingly used. Her second marriage, and the birth of numerous children, had the effect of estranging her from her two royal daughters, whose welfare and education ceased to be the sole object of her care. During the first years that elapsed after Ferdinand's death, her personal character as a woman unquestionably suffered much from calumny. Spaniards, at least of the lower orders, have that much of the Oriental about them, that they are prone to exasperate their enemies by assailing the fair fame of their wives and daughters; and from hill to hill, during the civil war, the term of "*soldados de la puta*," was scornfully applied to the troops of the Queen-Mother. There does not appear to have been grounds for the imputation. Christina is understood to have been married to her present husband soon after Ferdinand's death. That she did her duty by her first-born daughter can hardly be maintained. More pains were taken with Isabella's education during the short regency of Espartero, but this was not sufficient. At Espartero's fall the anomaly was witnessed of a *Progresista* of advanced views,—what in English politics might be termed a Liberal Whig,—at the head of affairs, whilst all the most important posts in the country, and especially all the military power, were in the hands of the *Moderados*, or Tories. The liberal party had sadly stultified itself by its conduct towards the close of Espartero's regency, when many of its prominent members combined with their political enemies to overthrow him. They paid dearly for it afterwards. They soon saw that they had been used as cat's-paws to take the chestnuts out of the fire for the *Moderados* to eat. Lopez quickly resigned; but, before doing so, he obtained a vote of the Cortes declaring the Queen of age. Fourteen is the very early age at which, by the then existing law, she should have attained her majority. She was declared major at thirteen years and one month. Her first minister, after that epoch in her life, was Olozaga, who remained a very short time in power. The intrigue that cast him down is well known, and may be termed one of the curiosities of modern history. The new minister urged upon his child-sovereign the signature of a decree dissolving a Cortes in which he did not possess the support which he hoped to obtain by means of a general election. The decree was signed and published. Soon afterwards another appeared, cancelling it, and a change of ministry was announced. In the Chamber then arose a man at that time little known, save as an obscure and audacious adventurer, the editor of a libellous and scurrilous political paper, the "*Guirigay*," in

which the Queen-Mother had been repeatedly most foully attacked. He proceeded to read a document, signed by the Queen, in which Olozaga was accused of having used actual violence to obtain the signature of the decree dissolving the Chamber. The charge was plausibly put. Olozaga replied to it in a speech which has always been deemed one of his most skilful oratorical efforts. But he was doomed as a minister, and soon afterwards he left the country. He was succeeded by the man who had denounced him in the Cortes. The Queen's first Moderado minister was Gonzales Bravo. He was also her last. Twenty-five years later he again was premier, when he had to vacate his place in all haste and to fly before the most radical revolution that has yet been witnessed in Spain, and in the bringing about of which the most powerful and active agent had been that Olozaga whom he had replaced in office a quarter of a century before.

These are strange coincidences, the very frolics of fate, too strange for fiction, but true in history. With such ministers, with such surroundings, as the girl-queen then had, it is not surprising if she grew up all that the enemies of her throne could desire to see her. Scandal soon busied itself with her name, and did so all the more after the ill-assorted marriage which a French intrigue brought about. That was, indeed, the turning-point of her career, the saddest moment of her life. She reigned twenty-two years after that, but ever falling lower in the affection and respect of her people.

From 1844 to 1854 the Moderado party held the reins of power. And here let us say a few words on the divisions of parties in Spain,—a subject which, after the long time during which Spanish politics have ceased to interest the public, is not familiar to many persons in England. Without going into the numerous subdivisions, the nation may be broadly divided into Absolutists, Moderates, Progressists, and Democrats. Formerly the Absolutists might also have been termed Carlists. All the supporters of Isabella were upholders of the constitution. But, since 1840, Carlism has been ever on the decline in Spain; and, as it declined, there uprose a party that would fain have seen the Queen absolute. This party recruited itself from the most reactionary fraction of the so-called Moderado party, whose most liberal section, on the other hand,—as was exemplified by what was known as the Liberal Union in 1854,—had a certain tendency to coalesce with the Progressistas. At the opposite extremity to the Absolutists we find the Democrats, now divided into two sections, of which Rivero and Orense are the apparent heads, the former of whom would probably accept a sovereign whose power should be restrained by institutions as democratic as is compatible with a monarchy, whilst the latter declares a republic to be the only form of government pure democracy admits. The Liberal Union, so often named during the late crisis in Spain, has grown into a distinct party and has lost its original nature.

In 1854, when the military revolt of O'Donnell, Serrano, Dulce, and Echague, against the reactionary and corrupt government of Sartorius, would have terminated in failure but for the uprising of the Progresistas in Madrid and other large towns, Espartero and O'Donnell were one day seen embracing on a balcony at Madrid, just as Serrano and Prim were the other day seen to do. The enthusiasm was prodigious; all old differences were to be forgotten; all Spaniards were thenceforward to live together as loving brothers; the Liberal Union was formed. The tailors could not work fast enough to clothe the National Guard which mustered its legions in the streets and squares of Madrid, and fraternised with the regular army. Many now living will remember the broiling summer day when the whole of the officers of that civic army were admitted to pay their respects to the heroes of the hour, Espartero and O'Donnell. Espartero, guileless and full of bonhomie, the most single-hearted and unassuming of men, showed real cordiality and pleasure in his manner of receiving the gratified burgesses, who, many of them but ill at ease in their bran-new uniforms, defiled before him, and marching round the large saloon in which the reception was held, passed in turn before O'Donnell, whose lofty figure towered above them all. Each of the two generals, who at that time held *de facto* in their hands the supreme power in Spain, shook hands with every man as he passed by. O'Donnell was gracious and smiling, and only a very keen observer, who knew his looks and feelings well, could have detected on his countenance an occasional fleeting expression of weariness and disgust. Two years later harmony was at an end. Those who had thought themselves united, or at least appeared to think so, were again at daggers drawn. The notorious discord between Espartero and O'Donnell was not a more fatal symptom than the stormy scenes in the Chamber. The old antipathy between Moderados and Progresistas broke forth, the more vehemently for its temporary repression. A personal friend of Espartero's,—a man of some talent, but of little prudence or stability, Escosura, then Minister for the Home Department,—actually assailed O'Donnell in the Chamber, charging him with views incompatible with the principles of the revolution of 1854. This brought matters to a head. The second anniversary of that revolution was close at hand. It was destined to be mournfully celebrated. Three days before its arrival a ministerial crisis was quickly followed by an insurrection in a Progresista sense. The advanced Progresistas and Democrats of the National Guard flew to arms. Barricades were thrown up, houses were occupied and obstinately defended, whole battalions of the National Guard figured in the fray, and fought with a courage and obstinacy not always displayed by civilian troops of that description. O'Donnell, who so recently had been fraternising with them, now showed them no mercy. The fighting was severe, and there was much greater loss

of life than in 1854. The thing ended in the triumph of the regular troops. Espartero, who, from discouragement and indecision of character, had remained supine during those bloody days, neither fighting himself nor seeking to prevent others from doing so, withdrew from the scene, greatly discredited, to pass the next twelve years in country retirement at Logroño, and thence to give his adhesion by letter to a revolution brought about by younger and more audacious spirits, and far more radical and important in its consequences than the one in which he had played a principal part. Progresista power was at an end, and the second period of Moderado rule commenced.

It is not to be supposed that the first prolonged term of Moderado power, from 1843 to 1854, had been allowed to pass without very important changes in the constitution of the country. It was the constant aim of that party to restrain and abolish the principle of the nation's sovereignty, and that they endeavoured to do by the Constitution of 1845, which struck at a free press and at the power of the Cortes. When these two institutions were more or less crippled, the government of the country became comparatively easy, especially when the first place was occupied by a red-handed military tyrant like Narvaez, who for years rode rough-shod over the Spanish people, applying the most ruthless measures to quell every indication of discontent. After the revolution of 1854 it was resolved to frame a new Constitution. The amalgamation of parties demanded concessions on both sides. The Constituent Cortes were to produce something acceptable by the followers of O'Donnell as well as by those of Espartero. It was urgent to complete this, and the urgency was admitted, but the representatives of the nation talked and quarrelled too much. Their work was not done when the crisis of July, 1856, occurred. O'Donnell ignored the results of their labours, and the Constitution of 1845, with some slight modifications, was again the law of the land. That Constitution, of which the predominant characteristic is that of the most complete centralisation, leaves too much in the power of the minister of the day. Had Spain possessed a strong-minded and sagacious sovereign, really desirous of the welfare of his people, and who knew how to choose his advisers, and, whilst listening to their advice, had been powerful himself to govern, the '45 Constitution might have sufficed for all the wants of Spain. But with a Queen in the hands of a camarilla composed of confessors, impostors, and Court favourites, and with ministers of the unscrupulous character of most of those who succeeded each other from 1856 to 1868, the opportunities of abuse and of misrule which it afforded were sure to be availed of to the utmost extent. By this time the Queen had begun greatly to fall in the esteem and respect of her subjects. At Madrid, during the first months of 1854, her private conduct was a common topic of conversation and subject of blame. In the clubs and cafés, and on the Prado,—the Madrileño's favourite promenade

and lounging-place,—hard things were said of her. She had already so sunk in public opinion that she did but just escape expulsion from Spain in the revolution of that year. The people surrounded her palace and guarded all the issues. Christina, whose own house had been attacked and partly burnt, had taken refuge with her daughter and was then the prime object of hatred. She was accused of sharing in many of the nefarious and lucrative jobs perpetrated about that time, and of enriching herself at the expense of the country. She, the insurgents exclaimed, must be brought to trial, and punished; and not a few were for making her daughter share her disgrace. With some difficulty Espartero and O'Donnell, by their personal exertions and influence, and by choosing an early hour of the morning for the execution of their design, succeeded in getting the Queen-Mother safely out of Madrid. The Queen herself was declared to have been misled and misrepresented. She published a proclamation of a liberal, conciliatory, and almost apologetic character. The generals made great parade of their attachment to her person, and of their conviction that in future she would be found all that her subjects could desire. And so the matter was patched up, and a good understanding, to outward appearance, was restored between the Crown and the nation. But when, in 1856, the Progresista party, which had numerous supporters in the ranks of the National Guard, beheld itself betrayed, cannonaded, and thrust aside for the advantage of its recent false friends, when, after O'Donnell had held office for only a few weeks, it saw him replaced by Narvaez and by others still more reactionary, a bitter feeling of exasperation grew up, and the Queen's recent promises were appreciated at their just value. It is from the bloodshed of 1856, and from the strong reactionary measures of that and the following year, that may be dated the rapid decline of that loyalty to the sovereign which has always been so strong in Spaniards. Olozaga himself, the first man of any mark in Spain who raised the anti-dynastic flag, lately expressed his surprise at the rapidity with which his doctrine was adopted by the Spanish people. He never had thought, he said, or believed it possible, that the old sentiment of respect for the Crown and its wearer could so soon have been effaced. Nor would it have been so, notwithstanding the burden of misgovernment and the many causes Spain had for discontent, had not the Queen's private conduct, the countless scandals to which the Court gave rise, roused the ire and disgust of the nation and made it feel humiliated in the person of its sovereign.

The Narvaez Cabinet of 1856-7 moved so rapidly in a retrograde sense, as to disgust even some of its own friends. Parliamentary government having virtually ceased, its fall was due, not to a vote of the Cortes, but to a palace intrigue, the most frequent cause of ministerial changes in Spain. One or two Cabinets of little merit held power for a short space, and then O'Donnell returned to office, in

liberal mood, and disposed, as far as possible, to revive the old union of 1854. This it was not easy to do. The broken promises and bloody episodes of 1856 were yet too recent. But he was in a vein of good luck. Just at the moment of his greatest difficulties, the repeated aggressions of the Moors of the Riff furnished him with the means of a magnificent diversion. All the Don Quixote spirit of the Spaniards flamed up high at the idea of a crusade against their old enemies. That was a ground upon which all parties could unite, and for a moment forget their political differences. The enemy was not very formidable to an army provided with most of the appurtenances of modern warfare, against which the Moors, ill-armed and undisciplined, were totally unable to contend. But the difficulties of the climate and country, in surmounting which the Spanish troops displayed excellent military qualities, in some degree compensated the inferiority of the foe. O'Donnell proceeded with a caution which rendered a disaster almost impossible, and was more than three months in getting from Ceuta to before Tetuan. Yet, as he now and then got up a fight of more or less importance, he succeeded in masking the slowness of his movements, and the enthusiasm of the Spanish public was as great as if he had been routing a formidable European army. The campaign was completely successful. The unlucky Moorish Government, beaten up to near the walls of Tangiers, agreed to pay a heavy indemnity, more than covering the expenses of the war, and O'Donnell returned home as Duke of Tetuan, to find himself the popular hero of the day, and to resume his post as Prime Minister. It was the brightest moment of his career, and for a moment it seemed as if Spain, stimulated in her self-esteem by her military success, were about to make a fresh start, and to display a vitality and a vigour in self-improvement for which none had given her credit. But the strife of parties soon quenched these hopes, whilst the noxious influence of the palace became more powerful and apparent than ever.

Several Cabinets succeeded that of O'Donnell, and made matters worse rather than better. Miraflores, a pseudo-Liberal and narrow-minded man, arbitrarily restricted the right of meeting to such a degree that the exasperated Liberals unanimously abstained from voting at the general election. After O'Donnell's fall from power in 1863, the Cabinets that followed were very short-lived. Mon followed Miraflores, and distinguished himself by his oppression of the press. Then came Narvaez again. But we may hasten on to 1866. Although at that time the attention of Europe was so absorbed by the war in Germany that minor events passed almost unnoticed, it must be in the memory of all that in June of that year Madrid was the scene of one of the fiercest conflicts witnessed there under Isabella's reign. It has been said that the dead were to be reckoned by thousands; and although in these cases, and

especially when the Government triumphs, it is very difficult to get at the truth, there is little doubt that about 1,500 persons were cast into prison or sent to the colonies. From that insurrection dates the commencement of the final period of misgovernment,—and the worst. It was “the crowning of the edifice” of reaction. O'Donnell commenced it by bringing a bill into the Cortes for the suspension of constitutional guarantees at the will of the sovereign. The Cortes, as then constituted, had nothing to refuse to the Minister. It was the inauguration of pure absolutism, scarcely any longer veiled by an appearance of constitutional government. Narvaez and Gonzales Bravo soon afterwards returned to power, and proceeded at a gallop along the path their predecessors had begun to tread.

To utterly unscrupulous men it was an easy one to follow. They had but to decree what to them seemed best, and if not obeyed, to punish with all the rigour of the laws they themselves had made. It was a reactionary reign of terror. Any record of the time will give an idea of the mode of government then in force. On the 31st of July, 1866, Gonzales Bravo, then Minister of the Interior, ordered governors of provinces to suppress every commencement of a meeting or association “with pitiless severity.” On the 23rd of September the permanent court-martial condemned thirty-three persons to death and fifty-four to transportation. In the night of the 29—30th of December the President of the Council of Ministers, Marshal Narvaez, caused a number of deputies to the Cortes, including Rios y Rosas, then President of the Lower House, and Salaverria, a former Minister of Finance, to be arrested for having drawn up an address to the Queen complaining of the arbitrary acts of the Government. Marshal Serrano, President of the Senate, was also arrested for having presented the address. Most of the prisoners were transported to the colonies. To prevent further trouble of this kind, the Government had recourse to a general election, which took place in March, 1867, and resulted in a chamber prepared to vote almost unanimously whatever the Minister proposed. There was no contest whatever, although the press, by that time exclusively ministerial, did talk of the struggle at the elections;—a talk which brought bitter smiles upon the lips of the Liberals, for the moment crushed and powerless, but pondering deep revenge. Not six members of the new chamber ever spoke or voted against Government. By this time all the chiefs, and a great many of the rank and file, of the constitutional party, were prisoners or refugees. M. Gonzales Bravo had no difficulty in passing his well-known law of “public order,” of which it has been said that it surpassed in severity anything known in the time of Ferdinand VII. and the famous Calomarde. It placed in the hands of the civil authorities, from the governors of provinces down to the most ignorant village alcalde,—a petty local authority named by the Government,—power to expel from their houses, during

a period of forty days, persons reputed dangerous. After that time a residence was to be assigned to them. The Cortes that voted this law were of course ready to vote anything, and it is not surprising if we find them giving the Government a bill of indemnity for all its illegalities; for the acts "by which it had abrogated the faculties of the legislative power," and which acts, or decrees, were declared thenceforward to be the law of the land. On the 11th of April, 1867, this bill passed by 245 votes against 4! In the Senate, Corradi, once the editor of the famous Madrid paper the "*Clamor Publico*," and reputed a staunch Progresista, but whose Liberalism must have dwindled before he consented to sit in such an assembly as that then was, proposed an amendment, refusing to adopt the decrees as laws, "because they rendered difficult a constitutional conciliation." With him voted sixty-four senators; but the bill was carried by an immense majority. In proof of the tyranny then exercised, we find, in January, 1867, four civilians condemned by court-martial to the galleys, two of them for twenty years and two for sixteen, for the clandestine publication of newspapers, called by the rather startling names of "*The Revolution*" and "*The Flash of Lightning*,"—probably of the same family as the "*Murcielago*," or Bat, which used to fly by night about the streets and coffee-houses of Madrid in the months preceding the revolution of 1854.

As a final example of a state of things which manifestly could not endure, on the 16th of February of the same year the Captain-General of Madrid published a bando, "decreeing death as the punishment of the authors and printers of clandestine writings, as well as against the capitalists who should supply them with money!" When things came to this pass the fall of the Government was merely a question of time. During the two years that elapsed before matters reached a climax, O'Donnell and Narvaez both died. Gonzales Bravo, a man of boundless audacity, thought he could govern without the military element, and tried to do so, but soon found his mistake. Even had Narvaez lived, he could not have averted the coming storm. The disaffection was too general. The excesses of the Government had alienated everybody. It had cut away its own supports, and charged a mine under its own feet. Concurrently with the tyranny of the ministers, the misconduct of the palace had continued to excite the indignation of the Spanish people. The amount of misery in the country daily augmented. Trade was at a standstill, and capital lay idle because none would venture on commercial or other enterprises when confidence was completely wanting, and a crash felt to be inevitable. Public works, which would have employed many, remained unexecuted for want of funds, and because contractors could not be found willing to pay the exorbitant bribes demanded by those who had their allotment. The necessities of life rose in price. Mendicancy increased beyond all precedent, as did

also the classes of crime that want and misery engender. Madrid, a capital without commerce or manufactures, and which depends mainly upon the general prosperity of the country, and upon the numbers of wealthy persons who in tranquil times inhabit it, became daily more dreary and deserted. There were many signs to tell of the coming tempest, and neither the Minister nor the Court were free from apprehensions. The usual precautions were taken. During the last five years, it is said, the Queen, imitating the prudent foresight of some other tottering potentates, had been sending money abroad. What her last premier did is less well known, but it is certain he is not in penury; and it has been asserted that he is extremely wealthy, and can well bear the loss of a large number of packages of valuable property which were found stowed away in a suburb of Madrid, to be forwarded to him at some future day, had not the new Government thought itself justified in detaining them until certain investigations should have been made.

Amongst other gross abuses that marked the latter years of Isabella's reign was the lavish bestowal of titles of nobility, often upon the most unworthy objects. In this manner disreputable adventurers, because they had found favour in royal eyes, were sometimes placed upon a par, in point of titular dignity, with the bluest blood in Spain. The Spanish grandee is not highly distinguished amongst European aristocracies, but his estimate of himself is colossal; and it is easy to imagine the supreme contempt and disgust with which he beheld upstarts pitchforked into his serene society, and, like himself, entitled to wear their hats in the presence of royalty. It was chiefly, however, titles that did not carry the grandeeship that were profusely scattered on the slightest grounds. As an example may be quoted a case well known in Madrid. When the Queen's eldest daughter was married to Count Girgenti it was necessary to provide her with a residence in the Spanish capital, her husband being one of a deposed family. It so happened that a wealthy Spanish capitalist had just completed a stately mansion, built upon the Prado, near the Fuente Castellana, one of the best situations in Madrid. No expense had been spared in its construction, and many princes habitually occupy palaces less spacious and commodious. The owner was asked if he would let it. He did not desire to do so, he said, but the house was at her Majesty's disposal. The generous offer was declined, and he was urged to name the rent. Hard pressed, he at last replied, with true Spanish gravity, "*Cinco duros al año*"—one guinea a year. It was evident he was not to be prevailed with, and the house was accepted. Shortly afterwards he was given to understand that it was proposed to confer upon him a marquisate. He not only declined the proposal, but, fearing to be ennobled against his will, took further steps to make it clearly understood that he was serious in refusing the distinction. Possibly he was influenced by the recollection that,

not very long before, the same title offered to him in lieu of the rent of his house, had been conferred upon the notorious Marfori.

In proof of how completely the Queen of Spain had converted into decided enemies those who had once been most faithful to her person and dynasty, we may cite the case of General Dulce. In 1841, when malcontent generals raised the banner of revolt against Espartero's regency, an attack was made upon the Queen's palace, the intention being, it was believed, to carry off Isabella, then a girl of eleven, and to make her person the rallying-point of insurrection. The attempt was defeated by the coolness and intrepidity of the officer commanding the halberdiers, a small body of picked men employed for palace guards. Against heavy odds a conflict was maintained in the very apartments of the palace; time was gained, and finally the assailants, foiled in their object, had to fly. The young officer who did this brave service to his sovereign is the present General Dulce. Thirteen years later, in 1854, we find him marching out of Madrid at the head of all the cavalry there in garrison, raising the banner of insurrection, and defending it by sharp deeds on the plain of Vicalvaro. He then rose against the Queen's Government. Fourteen years passed, and he rose against the Queen herself with the success that is known.

Most deposed sovereigns are able to indulge in dreams of restoration more or less probable. Even those who have proved themselves the least fit to reign have a party in the country which has thrust them forth. Some, whose faults as kings are undeniable, rest upon the attachment their personal qualities have inspired, and upon the almost superstitious feeling of loyalty to the Crown,—more conspicuous in former days than in our own. The history of the Stuarts affords striking examples of this kind of king-worship and fidelity to misfortune. In like manner the Bourbons, time after time, have seen the white cockade dyed blood-red in their defence. Even now many foresee the day when the House of Orleans may again be called to preside over the destinies of France. But no one, it is pretty certain, at least in Spain, desires or believes possible the restoration of Isabella or of her dynasty. She has left no friends in the country from which she has been expelled. No private virtues are there to redeem a long period of misrule. She must herself feel this, and that she is doomed to life-long exile. No wonder she looked mournful, and that the tears started to her eyes when, her last hope of succour dissipated, she quitted the Biarritz railway station to seek the hospitality afforded her by an enemy of her race. She surely then felt the bitterness of a misfortune due to her own faults. No more late and joyous feasts in the palace of Madrid, no more dalliance in the pleasant groves of rural residences, no more stately processions through uncovered crowds. The brilliant edifice of royalty has crumbled into dust, never to be restored, and

“Die schöne Tage zu Aranjuez sind schon vorbei!”

LAST CHRISTMAS AT CLEEVE.

FIFTEEN years ago I had been a pupil of Mr. Luttrell's, the rector of Cleeve. I had called him "old Luttrell" then, both in monologues addressed to myself, and confidences addressed to boys of my own age. I had also been in the habit of deriding the efforts he made to instruct me in the dead languages, and the efforts Mrs. Luttrell made to render the rectory like a home to me amongst others. Nevertheless, now when I got their cordial joint invitation to "come down and spend the Christmas week at Cleeve," I promptly accepted it, and reminded myself that Luttrell's years did not place him beyond the pale of human sympathy even now, and that the Rectory had not, after all, been so unhome-like a residence as to be revisited with anything but pleasure.

I had only just returned to England, after an absence of many years, when this note bidding me to Cleeve reached me. During those years circumstances had altered with me. I had gone to Italy as a civil engineer, to aid in the construction of a railway that was designed to unite Rome and some of the lesser Italian cities more closely. I had gone off to the blue Mediterranean in my elder brother's yacht. My mother had sobbed over the parting with me, the cadet of the house; and, amidst her sobs, had time to warn me against the papistical seductions of the Eternal City. My father had interspersed his farewell speech with cautions relative to miasma and the Pontine Marshes. That was nine years ago. I was a happy young fellow then, with many to care for me. Now father, mother, and brother were all dead, and I had come back the cadet of the house no longer, to reign in the place of the bright-faced boy, my senior by one year, who had taken me out to my labours in the south in his beautiful toy, "La Reine."

Some unaccountable delusion, some misty remembrance of the time when I really believed in the season as a thing to be joyfully anticipated, caused me to quit my Italian quarters, and come back to England about the 18th of December. I had no one to welcome me,—no one to go to,—no one whom I could ask to come to me. The novelty of my position and my youth must be my excuse when I say that, under these adverse circumstances, I still had the temerity to announce myself as "arrived at the St. James's Hotel, Piccadilly," through the medium of the Morning Post. There I determined to stay until the season of universal domestic hilarity was over. Not

even the flush of novelty could dazzle me into going down to the old home of which I was master now, while the fervour of the spirit of Christmas-time was over the land. I knew that I should be a boy again when I came to see the old things, all of them sanctified to me by association with the mother I had adored, and the father and brother between whom and myself there had always been the frankest, fondest affection. I could not go and see the old things and old servants yet; so I determined to stay on and be miserably luxurious and comfortable, and to take mine ease at mine inn.

The hotel was not very fully occupied just then. Its waiters, consequently, had plenty of time to devote to my service and comfort. For two or three days I endeavoured to persuade myself that I was very happy and contented here, "taking mine ease at mine inn," while other people were compelled by conventionality to assume interests and enthusiasms which they did not feel. But the hollow pretence wherewith I had deceived, or attempted to deceive, no one save myself, broke through utterly as Christmas-day approached, and I began to wish heartily that some one of my own blood and kindred would remember me, and solicit me to grace his board on the coming day of universal peace and good-will.

Desolation deepened. During the first three days of my stay at the hotel I had at least the sense of companionship which constant chance meetings with fellow-sojourners and sufferers on the staircase gives a man. There had been a colossal cattle-show held in the great market, hard by Camden Town. London had been reeking, so to say, with agriculturists' of every grade, who apparently, with one consent, had journeyed due north daily,—journeyed with a oneness of purpose that was symptomatic of that "beef on the brain" which has won its recognition as a national complaint from the pen of Mr. George Sala. The squirearchy of the land were well represented at the St. James's. But as the 25th approached they returned to their flocks and herds and families. And as I watched them departing in rapid succession,—their cabs, in most cases, groaning under the weight of hampers from Fortnam and Mason's,—I realised more forcibly than I had done before that I was very much alone; and as I realised this truth, I saddened over it.

This being my mood, it was but a small marvel that I should have received and read the Luttrells' letter, inviting me to join their family party at Cleeve, with the liveliest pleasure. That announcement in the *Morning Post*, made in the ardour of youth, without sufficient cause, had quickly borne fruit. They had seen it, and had acted upon it in "a manner worthy of their unceasing kindness," I told myself in a gush of good feeling, though in what way their kindness had been ceaselessly manifested towards me I should have been at a loss to describe had I been put to the test. However, the phrase did as well as another. Accordingly, I used it in my letter of

acceptance, and did not stay to analyse the truth of it as I drove about eagerly in search of such novelties of the season as would, I imagined, be most welcome to the family in Cleeve Rectory.

I had nearly forgotten the personal appearance of my former tutor, and of each member of his family, until I received this agreeable reminder. But now my memory refreshed itself, and on my journey down to Cleeve, on the 23rd, I conjured up tolerably correct visions of them all ;—the bland, portly Rector, who loved the classics so well that he was never happy unless he had his house full of little boys to whom he could impart them, at the rate of £100 per annum a-piece ;—the excellent manager and lady his wife, who never let the want that was the ruling power in that house be obvious to those who did not dwell therein ;—the four or five little girls who had been magnificently petted or overlooked by all the boys, according to the respective natures of these latter. “Why, they must be young women now,” I thought, and then I remembered that they were pretty.

Lastly, I thought of the house. While my mind was undergoing a course of instruction and improvement within it, I had regarded it with scorn as the embodiment of age and discomfort. It had been a monastery,—that is to say, some portions of it were portions of the original building, but the part that the family and the boys inhabited when I was there as a pupil was comparatively modern, and unconditionally ugly. There had been a splendid old shell of a chapel with a richly-groined roof standing at the extreme end of the disused side of the house I remembered, and I caught myself pitying the poverty and despising the taste which had permitted the Luttrells to disregard the claims such a fine piece of good Gothic architecture had to being restored and renovated. Pity gained the day, as I reflected how awfully hard pressed the man must have been for money for immediate need who could suffer such a place as Cleeve Rectory and its grounds to continue in shabby decay.

The train by which I was going down was to arrive at Gollington Gate at 5.10. Cleeve was just three miles from the station, and so my first thought when I got out was to secure a fly, for I remembered that there had been a lack of locomotive power in the old days at the Rectory. Before my portmanteau could be transferred from the porter's back to the fly, I was made to understand that time had changed circumstances. A groom in charge of a four-wheeled dog-cart arrested my attention and portmanteau, and gave me to understand that the four-wheeled dog-cart and pair of bright Scotch chestnuts were at my service, through Mr. Luttrell's grace.

I was at the entrance-gate of the Luttrells' grounds in less than twenty minutes, and the first glance into them showed me more plainly still that time had been very good to them. They were extensive, undulating grounds,—they had been unkempt wildernesses, when I left them,—well planted, well kept, well cared for. They

prepared me for the even greater change which had come over the old house. The whole of the exterior had been restored, to be in keeping with the old chapel, which I now saw was brilliantly lighted.

I went in,—in to the midst of strangers. My old tutor was portly and bland still, but his blandness was no longer that of a man who cannot afford to be otherwise. Mrs. Luttrell was a handsomer, younger-looking woman than she had been fifteen years ago. Perhaps she owed a little of her comeliness and youthfulness to the sweeping black velvet dress and softly-falling delicate white lace that nestled about her head and throat. But she owed still more, I thought, to the absence of the look of watchful, wary care from which I had never before seen her face free. As for the five little girls, they were five rather striking-looking young women now, and as I stood bowing before them, and responding to their graceful words of welcome, I congratulated myself more heartily than ever on that happy thought which had induced me to let the readers of the *Morning Post* know that “Gerald Brandon, Esq.,” had “arrived from Rome at the St. James’s Hotel, Piccadilly.”

We sat for about an hour in what had been the schoolroom. Had been the schoolroom! It was difficult to remember that it had ever served such a purpose. A marble chimney-piece, supported by handsomely-carved serpentine pillars, reigned in the place of the battered smoke-darkened “blower” that had been put up to add to our comfort during the hours of education. A velvet pile carpet had displaced the old frayed cocoa-nut matting; couches and easy chairs, spider tables, ormolu and old china, rare odours from rare flowers in the conservatory adjoining were around me. The room was fraught with these and similar things. Still it lacked the saving grace of the art I had learnt to understand and appreciate in Italy. The only thing my taste warmed to in the midst of the splendour in which we were seated was a bronze bull, and of that Mrs. Luttrell showed her appreciation by using it as a door-weight.

“It will explain itself in time,” I thought, as I followed in the wake of a footman, when that hour was passed and Mrs. Luttrell signified that it was time to dress for dinner.

There had been a brief colloquy between her and the master of the house as she hinted this. “Won’t you wait for Georgie?” he had asked. “You know her train doesn’t get in till seven.”

“I really thought it foolish to alter the dinner hour, Richard,” Mrs. Luttrell had replied, with the same sort of suave bitterness she had been wont to develop towards the scholars who had asked twice for meat of old.

“Mr. Brandon has had a long day of it, you must remember, papa,” I heard the eldest Miss Luttrell say reproachfully as I went out of the room; and I thought her a very nice girl for her consideration, for I did not know who Georgie was, and I happened to be hungry.

The old chapel of the monastery had been renovated, and turned into a modern dining-room in a way that was well worthy of its original designer. It was really magnificently done. Lavers and Barraud had put in the windows, and the furniture was from some equally correct ecclesiastical firm. We dined à la Russe, at a round flower and fern-adorned table, that was but a spec in the wide expanse of Turkey-carpeted floor. And as we dined I wondered more and more how it had all been done. For there were no shortcomings. This was no violent effort made to dazzle me,—the eligible guest. As we were to-day they had evidently been accustomed to be for such a length of time that the novelty had quite worn itself off for them. Could it be the tithes or the tutoring that had told so well? Now that I was back in the place, I remembered its old sordidness much more vividly than I had ever done before;—remembered it in spite of, perhaps by reason of, the luxury that so surrounded us, and seemed to try to shut out the memory of the past.

Looked at by the light of many wax-candles, seen through the glimmer of plate and glass and the glamour of flowers, the Miss Luttrells were very pretty. They were marvellously alike,—alike in person, and mode of speech, and thought, and manner. They had all apparently taken their elder sister as the fitting type for them to emulate, and they had all succeeded in resembling her very closely. They wore the same sort of ornaments, they said the same set sentences, they thought exactly the same about every picture, book, or contemporaneous event that was mentioned. I began to hope long before dinner was over that the expected "Georgie" would prove to be possessed of more individuality than the five Miss Luttrells could boast of between them, as otherwise my time at Cleeve Rectory would hang heavy on my hands.

Even before she came this Georgie seemed to be a discordant note in the otherwise harmonious strain. "Where shall you lodge Georgie, my dear?" Mr. Luttrell asked when we were left alone at dessert.

Mrs. Luttrell nodded her head sententiously as she replied that "Georgie would be very well taken care of."

"I suppose," Mr. Luttrell said hesitatingly, "that the same room she had when she was here before couldn't be managed,—eh?" And then the lady of the house frowned and nodded at her husband in a way that betrayed to me that I was the occupant of the room Mr. Luttrell had alluded to.

"Georgie Deane will have the step-room," Miss Luttrell said coldly to her father. "She will be more comfortable there, I should think, than if she felt she was in the way of any of our arrangements."

"I should think so," emphatically chorussed her four sisters.

Georgie Deane! I remembered her now,—remembered her clearly, though for fifteen years I had neither seen her nor heard her

name. She flashed back upon me as her name was spoken,—a beautiful child of seven or eight on a pony that was as handsome as a dream. She had been a sort of princess to my boyish mind,—the realised ideal of wealth and loveliness. How could the Luttrells speak of her so indifferently, I thought, as I remembered the fact,—namely, that Georgie Deane was the adopted child, the acknowledged heiress, of the richest people in the whole circle of the Luttrells' acquaintance,—the richest people in the county in which Cleeve was situated, in fact. The step-room,—my own barren dormitory of old,—good enough for Georgie Deane! The cold air and the sparkling wines had surely told upon my head.

A little later the ladies left us. Mrs. Luttrell beneficently hinting, as she wafted her five daughters away, that if I carried out the "delightfully civilised foreign custom," and accompanied them, she would not think the worse of me. But I, being desirous of solving the Georgie mystery, doggedly remained behind, in spite of her assurance that "I had a mind that would appreciate such music as her dear girls were prepared to delight my ears with."

I stayed behind to very little purpose. The adroit cross-questioning to which I subjected my former master, elicited nothing beyond the bare statement that the "Georgie" who was come,—or coming,—to-night, was indeed no other than the pretty little child on the prancing pony who had made her infantile calls on the Luttrells' in almost regal state of old. "Eh! you remember her, do' you?" said Mr. Luttrell. "Yes,—she was a pretty child, an uncommonly pretty child." Then, just as I hoped that he was going to enlarge on the topic, and state whether or not she had fulfilled that early promise of beauty, Mr. Luttrell looked apologetically at me, and said it was dole-night. "My poor always come up on the night of the 23rd of December for the annual doles, and I must go and see it given. Will you come with me?"

"No, thank you," I replied, "I think I will join the ladies." So he went off alone to superintend the distribution of the Cleeve dole, and I made my way along the metamorphosed passages to the drawing-room.

For a minute or two I thought it was untenanted. Then I heard a rustling sound, and looking over in the direction from which that sound proceeded, I saw a young lady gathering herself up from a recumbent position in a corner that was rather in the shade. In a moment I saw that it was not one of the Miss Luttrells. In another moment I saw that it was none other than Georgie.

I was fresh from the land of full-eyed, grandly-formed, massive-browed women. I had come to associate beauty chiefly with the cleanly-cut profile, and rather long-nosed, oval face, which is the common attribute of the Roman woman of nearly every grade. But as this graceful creature gathered herself up from the couch, I felt

that there might be more fascination in another type, more brightness, even more power. She came out from the shade, away into the full light of the chandelier under which I was standing, holding out her hand to me and saying,—“You are Mr. Brandon. I must recall myself to your memory, for I knew you very well when you were a boy and I was a little girl. The Luttrells might have been quite sure I should effect the introduction for myself, since they left me alone to do it,” she continued, laughing, as I replied that “I believed I was addressing Miss Deane.” “Yes,” she said in answer to this question, “my name is left to me still.” Something like a shade fell over the bright face as she spoke; and as she averted her eyes and gazed absently down on the centre vase full of flowers, I had an opportunity of looking at her.

There was no regular beauty after all. The bent head was covered with dark shining, chestnut hair,—luxuriant hair that looked all the more luxuriant, perhaps, by reason of the loose way in which it was wrapped about her head and kept in place by a plain jet comb. The great grey eyes were set deeply under a straight, wide brow. A delicate nose that would evidently turn up a little when she lifted her head, and a splendidly-cut, clever wide mouth, the lips of which parted presently in a broad smile, were there. This was her face, and it was fair enough; but it was her shape, her glorious, graceful, full, yet supple shape that struck me most.

“My name is left to me still.” I caught myself pondering over these words, and wondering what they meant. Many other things seemed to be left to her, for she was handsomely, even richly dressed for so young a woman, and her beautiful, slender white hands were heavily weighted with rings. I wasted time in these ponderings, and before I could speak to her again the eldest Miss Luttrell came back hastily into the room.

“I really beg your pardon, Mr. Brandon, for leaving you alone in this way,” she began in her low-toned, carefully-subdued voice, “but papa likes us to go down and speak to the poor on this night. He is very much annoyed with you, Georgie, for not coming,” she added, turning to the young lady, whose face was held up again now with all the shade gone from it.

“Is he really?” Miss Deane asked, in an amused tone. “Well, I’ll explain to him when he comes in, that my hardened heart counsels me not to go and joyously gaze upon the recipients of the dole, as if I didn’t want it just as much as they do.”

Miss Luttrell merely looked blank, calm reprobation of this speech, and then addressed me. “Will you come and see the people, Mr. Brandon? It really is a pretty sight; mamma sent me to ask you.”

“I shall be very happy,” I said, hoping that Miss Deane would come too. But as I followed Miss Luttrell from the room, I saw

Georgie making her way back to the couch from which she had risen when I entered it. We walked slowly along to the scene of the distribution of the dole, and as we went my curiosity respecting the change which had come over all things was partly set at rest. The eldest Miss Luttrell was very lucid in her statement; it seemed to me, that she made it almost officially.

"It is very strange of Georgie,—almost bad taste, I think,—to separate herself from us all in this way, don't you think so?"

"I can hardly call her coming here to spend Christmas 'separating herself' from you all," I said.

"Her coming was almost a matter of necessity," Miss Luttrell said, rather spitefully. "She wouldn't come near Cleeve if she had any other place to go to. Mamma is so kind and thoughtful that she would invite Georgie here for the holidays, though she knows it does not add to our pleasure."

"The poor heiress! is she so desolate?" I asked.

"Heiress! What do you mean? Oh! I suppose you are thinking of the Sawles. Yes, they did mean to leave her something, but she wore out their patience as she grew up, and,—of course it's very painful for us,—when they died everything was left to papa and us. Georgie Deane is out as a governess. Isn't it a pretty sight?"

"Charming," I said, for we had come into the servants' hall, the upper end of which was occupied by the Luttrell family, all of them beaming with charity. They were giving out money done up in silver paper, and loaves of bread, to the aged and the needy of the parish of Cleeve. They were winning the kindest consideration and the heartiest regard which "their poor" were capable of feeling; winning it by means of that money which the Sawles had left them. No wonder that the poor girl up-stairs had refused to come down and see the distribution of the dole.

There was plenty of room for me on the temporary platform on which the Luttrells were sitting, but Mrs. Luttrell swept her dress aside, and blinked and nodded her desire to me that I should take this place by her side. "This is a sweet sight," she whispered, as one old crone after another came up and was servile at the foot of the Luttrell throne. "My dear girls delight in this. Ah! Mr. Brandon, we have always taught them to consider others before themselves." She shook her head pensively as she spoke, and looked at them all so admiringly that I felt impelled to say—

"Don't you think they are leaving Miss Deane alone rather too long?"

"Oh! dear no! She chooses most perversely to absent herself from this little ceremony; besides, we make no stranger of her," Mrs. Luttrell said, sharply.

"I have just heard of her cruel reverse of fortune from Miss Luttrell," I said, abruptly. "How brightly she seems to bear it."

"If she were like those dear, sensitive girls of mine, the sad thoughts of how she must have pained her kind patrons before they could have so strongly marked their displeasure, would surely be what you call her brightness," Mrs. Luttrell said, waving her head backwards and forwards. "She was a sad trial to those dear Sawles,—a sad, sad trial. What poor Mrs. Sawle would have done after her husband's death had it not been for that dear, good, unselfish girl of mine, Caroline, I do not know; but Caroline was Mrs. Sawle's right hand, her only comfort; consequently, Miss Deane is pleased to regard Caroline as her enemy."

I could have wrung the neck of the prosperous pharisee,—the self-satisfied mother at my side. It was borne in upon me clearly and strongly as she spoke that Georgie Deane had been worsted by these people. And though they were my most hospitable entertainers, it was borne in upon me too with equal strength that she had been unfairly worsted. My interest in the distribution of the dolls was so very laxly felt and feebly portrayed after this, that Mrs. Luttrell quickly proposed a return to the drawing-room. "Our little parochial excitements seem tame to you after your life abroad," she said, rising up. "Come, dears," she added to her daughters, "we must remember that these things are not near to Mr. Brandon's heart as they are to ours."

I might have felt rebuked by this speech if I had not had those doubts about Miss Deane in my mind. As it was, I began to distrust these Luttrells root and branch,—to distrust them and their air of being united in the beautiful bonds of family affection, and, consequently to care very little whether Mrs. Luttrell meant to rebuke me or not.

Looking at it in the light cast by the revelations of the Luttrells themselves, I saw a good deal that was condemnatory of the family conduct in Mr. Luttrell's manner towards his fair young guest when he at last came in. He dwelt at rather tiresome length on her goodness in coming, and his pleasure at seeing her. She waited until he had quite finished, and then she answered in a way that showed me she wished her words to be well heeded by them all. "I would not have missed coming to Cleeve this Christmas for all the wealth I once thought was to be my own," she said, as blithely as if the loss of wealth was a very minor evil in her eyes. "Mrs. Luttrell gave me the option of retracting my long-given promise and staying away, you know," she continued, with a low laugh.

Mrs. Luttrell and her eldest daughter looked at each other as the visitor spoke.

"Mamma took the expensive journey into consideration, Georgie," Miss Luttrell said in an explanatory tone. "A dull country village has no charms for you; we remembered that."

"Ah! well, I counted the cost and came," Miss Deane said, care-

lessly. "I don't think I shall find Cleve dull by any means this Christmas."

The evening was a laboured one after this. The hours lagged in spite of the Miss Luttrells' unceasing efforts at the piano. The sisters all played and sang, and all feigned to take the greatest delight in playing and singing for its own sake. Certainly I offered them no incentive to continue wearying themselves and others, for I was absorbed, utterly absorbed, in Georgie Deane.

I felt something like compunction the next morning for the indifference I had suffered myself to manifest towards the daughters of the house. By way of compensation I did violence to my taste and inclination, and volunteered to accompany Miss Luttrell in a tour round the grounds in search of holly berries, and the few winter flowers that were still uncut. We were away a long time, a wearisome time it was to me, for my fancy was caught and chained by Miss Deane. I chafed terribly at the delay when Caroline Luttrell would pause to consider its decorative qualities before cutting an evergreen or a bloom. I wearied for a return to the house, from which we seemed to get further away every moment. I took a savage pleasure in enlarging on Miss Deane's matchless grace and peculiar beauty, declaring at last, in revenge for Caroline's measured steps, that Miss Deane possessed what not one Englishwoman in a thousand was blessed with—individuality, and a manner of her own.

"Not the best manner in the world for a governess to have," she said, quietly. "Shall we go back to the house and arrange these now, Mr. Brandon?"

As we went back to the house we met Mrs. Luttrell coming to look for us. My hostess was flushed and agitated, but suave as ever as she spoke;—"My dear Caroline," she began, "we want your head in the house. She is my prop and stay, Mr. Brandon. More of our friends have arrived, you must go in. As I am out I should like to show Mr. Brandon the way I have laid out my rose-garden."

She compelled me to go back with her to look at a stiff, commonplace piece of ground between high holly-hedges. I marvelled at her tactics the while, for I had been telling myself the whole morning that it was obviously their plan to throw me much in the company of, and finally marry me to, their much-praised eldest daughter. Presently Mrs. Luttrell ruthlessly uprooted this idea. "I am sure you will forgive me for robbing you of your companion, but Sir Percy Holdsworth has come, and Caroline and he are old friends, and probably will have much to say to each other."

She said this so significantly that I was justified in asking, "Am I to congratulate you on your daughter's engagement?"

"Well, not yet; we cannot allow it to be hinted at yet, for my dear child is one of those sensitive plants who would shrink away from all mention of such a thing; but we cannot be blind to his

hopes; besides, it was the dear, dying wish of our esteemed friend Mrs. Sawle; he was such a favourite of hers, and she was so attached to Caroline, that it was but natural that she should pray for their union."

"How did Miss Deane lose that old lady's favour?" I asked.

"Ah!" Mrs. Luttrell said, shaking her head, "I fear if I were to tell you it would not raise your opinion of Miss Deane. She is a pushing, presuming girl; she has come here now, almost forced herself here, though she knows it cannot be pleasant to Sir Percy as an old friend of the Sawles to see her;—so different to my children; she frightens them. 'Why, mamma, we can't understand it,' they say. I only hope she may not have a bad influence over them." When she had said this, and heard that I thought the arrangement of the stumps, which marked the place where the standard roses had been, "perfect," Mrs. Luttrell suffered me to escort her back to the house, where she left me in peace at last.

"Caroline, and Fanny, and Sir Percy are going to ride over to Playford, mamma," one of the younger girls came forward to exclaim as we got into the hall; "we have not half holly enough,—they are going to order some more." Mrs. Luttrell acquiesced in the arrangement, proposing as an amendment that I should join this riding party. But I pleaded "letters to write" as an excuse for remaining behind and seeing more of Miss Deane.

I did see more of her. I saw enough of her during that day and the three following ones to make me resolve to stake my chances of happiness upon her. She had such a winning beauty, and she did so openly bemoan having, "after all," to go and be a governess, that I could but sigh to make her my wife. She confided in me, too, telling me the story of the way in which the Luttrells had stepped in between herself and the people who had almost ruined her young life,—telling me how bitter her disappointment, how great her rage against them had been at first,—telling me much about herself, in fact, but not all,—not quite all.

"You wonder at me for coming here, don't you, after all I have said against them?" she said to me one morning.

"I did wonder,—now I only rejoice, for I have met you."

She blushed fiercely as I said this, and looked at me with such anxious, pitying eyes, that I almost believed for a moment that our positions must be reversed,—that she was the prosperous lady still, and I some one's defrauded heir. But the expression altered before I could analyse it, and she said,—"Some day or other I'll explain my reason to you for coming, but I can't now. What do you think of Carrie Luttrell? Would you marry her if you had the chance of marrying her?"

There was a genuine, almost a child-like eagerness in her way of asking this that made me clearly understand she was not thinking of

me at the time. It was a painful conviction to be brought home to a man by a girl he was so nearly loving as I was loving her. "No,—a thousand times," I answered.

"No! Once will do,—I'm so glad," she said simply, heaving a little sigh after she had said it. "Oh, dear! this is a long, long, weary week, isn't it, Mr. Brandon?"

"Are you longing for the festivities of the twenty-eighth?" I said, with the bitterness of a man who cares for nothing save the presence of the adored one.

"Yes, I am longing for it,—that is the right phrase,—longing to fight and triumph." She went away from me as she said this, leaving me rather unhappy, and very much puzzled.

I was so infatuated with her that I literally took no heed of what was passing around me. Now I remember that when the Miss Luttrells came home from their ride to Playford on Christmas Eve they were not accompanied by Sir Percy Holdsworth. Then I scarcely noticed the fact, for I was watching Georgie Deane. I heard from one of the girls that "Sir Percy had asked Carrie for the first dance at their ball on the twenty-eighth." So I supposed he was coming; but, truth to tell, I thought very little about him. I was occupied wholly and solely in thinking of Georgie. Anxious as I was to secure her, I did not want the awkwardness of a young engagement while we were staying at Cleeve. Accordingly I deferred speaking the words that were necessary, in spite of the kind and marked manner in which the Luttrells gave me a dozen opportunities a day of doing so.

At length, on the morning before their ball, Mrs. Luttrell spoke to me, acting as the temporary guardian of the young lady I was singling out and rendering so conspicuous by my attentions. In plain English, she asked me "what I meant." In plain English, I told her that I meant a speedy marriage, if Miss Deane would have me. Speaking to me as my mother might have done, she said, she strenuously advised my settling it that day,—that very day.

I was only too glad to endeavour to act upon her advice. I did not stay to attempt to find out the reason why it was given. After all, I had wronged this lady and her daughters, I told myself. In the depths of my heart they had stood accused of the venial crime of trying to entangle me in a matrimonial engagement with one of themselves. Whereas it was proved that they had cherished no thought of the kind; or, if they had cherished such a thought, that they had amiably relinquished it on behalf of Georgie Deane.

For all the want of prudent forethought and the utter absence of reasonable reflection I had shown in falling captive to Miss Deane's charms with such celerity, I was essentially a practical man. During the hour that intervened between Mrs. Luttrell's leaving me and my seeking Miss Deane, I arranged a clear verbal statement of my affairs and position, and settled determinately what I could give to my wife

if I lived, what I could leave to my widow if I died. I even went so far in making my plans for the future as to write to a London architect with whom I had some slight acquaintance, asking him to go down to Brandon Lodge and send me an estimate of what a new drawing-room and conservatory would cost. This letter I left open, meaning to show it to Georgie when she had accepted me, and given me the right to claim her interest in my home. "She may suggest a new boudoir, or something of that sort," I thought, as I made my way to the room in which Mrs. Luttrell had promised me I "should find Georgie alone about one."

The four days we had passed together at Cleve Rectory had ripened my intimacy with this sweet stranger amazingly. She was a girl who was inevitably soon closely regarded by a man towards whom she showed friendly feeling. There was something contagious about her bright, free frankness. There was something irresistible in her candour. There was something thrillingly flattering in her kindness,—in the confidential way she had of congratulating and bewailing herself openly. I had never been guilty of the coxcomb's course with any woman. I had never thought any lady who honoured me with her notice over-ready to "meet my views" and marry me. But as I sought her presence this morning I did feel tolerably sure that Georgie Deane liked me with the liking that rapidly develops into love when love is declared legitimate. I was just as far from feeling any fear as to the issue, as I was from being over-confident about it. I blessed the fate which had made this girl, whom I loved so well already, ready to love me. That was all.

I found her alone, as I had been told I should find her,—alone through no collusion with the Luttrells I quickly discovered. She was sitting on the fender-stool close to the fire as I entered, trying to read, shielding her flushed rounded cheek from the blaze with one pretty hand. She threw the book down as I approached her, and leant forward slightly to meet me. "I am so glad you've come," she began; "I was just getting to find it all unendurable. Those people can't be dressing for their ball at this hour of the day. What are they doing? I can't get hold of one of them, and any companionship would have been better than my own thoughts this morning."

"Try mine in default of better."

"I don't believe I could have any better," she said gravely, shaking her head; and then I went near to her, full of my purpose, loving her so dearly, that the longing to tell her so nearly choked me. In a moment a self-reproachful, sorrowful look flashed across her face, and she had risen up, and was standing by my side, reddening one instant, and paling the next, under the influence of some intense emotion.

"Your companionship will be very good for me," she began, her

voice trembling a little. "I want to tell some honest, true friend what I am doing. I will tell you."

"Let me tell you something first, Georgie," I said, imploringly, for I felt suddenly as if she were slipping away from me.

"No, no, no; ladies first," she interrupted. "Sit down there,"—she indicated a chair at some little distance,—“and I'll make my confession walking about the room. I can do it better so, for I needn't look in your face then.” I did as she commanded me, and she began;—“You shall hear what is the hardest part of it all for me to tell. I came down here this Christmas to win back a lover. What do you think of that?” She came and stood close opposite to me as she spoke, and I did not know what to think of “it,” or of her. “Isn't it a humiliating confession?” she went on passionately. “However I tell you my tale, you won't think the cause sufficient excuse for my acting as I am acting; but you deserve to hear all I have to say, so I'll say it. Now, had I not better begin at the beginning?” I made a movement of assent, and she resumed. “You know how I was brought up,—adopted when I was two years old by the Sawles, who were tired of poodles and parrots, and of their futile efforts to make anything human that had arrived at years of discretion love them. So they took me away from my poor consumptive, widowed mother, and pampered me for sixteen years. Then Percy Holdsworth and I fell in love with each other, and he wasn't a baronet then, and the Sawles set their faces against it, and the Luttrells, who had been undermining for some time, came to the surface, and blamed me openly, and called me ‘ungrateful.’”

She quivered with anger as she said this; but I could not speak to soothe her, and she went on;—“It ended as such things always end,—in the weakest going to the wall. I offended the Sawles past all possibility of winning their forgiveness. Old Mrs. Sawle raged herself into an illness, and Caroline Luttrell came to nurse her, and I was treated like a naughty child who wanted to do something disgraceful. Percy was away at the time. I had no one to help me, so I got rash, and said I would go and stay with some of my mother's people. I had no idea that I was breaking all ties with the Sawles by doing this. No one warned me, no one tried to save me. They let me go, and then they sent fifty pounds and my piano, and said ‘they had done with me.’”

She dropped her face down upon her hands and sobbed as she said this, and still my tongue clave to the roof of my mouth, and I could not comfort her, though I loved her so dearly.

“Oh, my life! my life after that, my sad, broken life! Mr. Brandon, I can never hope to make you understand all I had to go through. My uncle's family believed that I must have done something shameful to be cast off in such a way, and I fathomed that belief, and would not condescend to explain to them how it really had

been. Then, hardest of all, Percy did not seek me out. Perhaps he believed badly of me too. At any rate, I heard of him next as having come unexpectedly into the baronetcy through the death of his cousin, and as being 'devoted to Miss Luttrell.' Devoted to Miss Luttrell! I will shatter that devotion. I have come here to do it; I will win him back to-night."

She spoke this last sentence so softly, it fell so musically upon my ears, after the burst of wild excitement in which she had uttered the preceding words, that I was reminded both of the tigress and the dove. By this time I had schooled myself into submission to the inevitable, so I obeyed the social burden that was on me to speak to the lady who had honoured me by reposing a painful confidence in me. "If he is worthy of you, Miss Deane, I will wish you all the success you can wish yourself," I said, with some effort. It did not seem to me on the face of it that any man who could have left her unsought for so long a time could be worthy of her.

She shook her head, and laughed half mournfully. "Sensible people would tell you that he was worthy of me, because I'm only a goose," she said. Then she added, impatiently, "What nonsense is talked about that same worthiness. He was a dear fellow five years ago, and I loved him because I loved him. Any way, he's too good for Carrie Luttrell. He shall not be condemned to pass his life with that piece of perfectly proper mediocrity. But I have more to tell you,—more folly you'll call it, very likely. The Luttrells invited me here ages ago,—long before they knew he was coming down here this Christmas. When they found he was coming they wrote to put me off, and gave, as a reason for doing so, their regard for my feelings; "it must be unpleasant for me to meet any friend of the Sawles," they said. I baffled them then, as I mean to do again. I have lost fortune and friends, through them; but I won't lose my lover. I baffled them with an utterly unexpected stroke of humility. I wrote back, and said, 'I would not presume to suppose that Sir Percy Holdsworth would be affected in any way by my presence, and as I had no other place to go to, I would ask it of their kindness not to withdraw their invitation.' They couldn't help themselves after that. I came, and they're obliged to make the best of it. But if I don't conquer, oh, Mr. Brandon, I'm ruined!"

Her bright, beautiful, quick-moving face looked so grief-stricken, so horror-stricken, as she said this, that I actually started.

"I'm ruined!" she repeated.

"You have staked your happiness on this," I said as calmly as I could. It was far from pleasant to be compelled to calmly discuss her chances of winning another man with the lady I loved myself.

"My happiness?" she said interrogatively. "Yes," she added hastily, "my happiness, of course, and my comfort too. Do you know," she continued, confidently coming to a sudden stand-still just

in front of me again, "Percy used to think a great deal of a good appearance, and I gratified his taste. That is about the truth of it. Well, I didn't want to come and be shabby before him now, so I have spent every penny in getting things to look nice in. What do you think of me?"

"Think!" I cried, starting up; "why, I think that a man who could care what you are dressed in is,—can't be——"

"Worthy of me," she interrupted. "That is a romantic view of it, and I don't want you to be romantic. You know very well indeed, Mr. Brandon, that if I looked shabby and dowdy, you, amongst others, would not rank my worthy merits quite so highly as you do now. At any rate, whether it's a mistake or not, I have made it. I shall know to-night."

There was silence between us for several minutes after she said this. Then I broke it by saying, "I do not know what motive may have impelled you to tell me this, Miss Deane; but at least I may wish you success and happiness." She held her hand out to me,—she bent her head forward towards me,—she inclined to me so kindly, so sweetly, so bewilderingly in this hour of my agony.

"Oh! you do know why I have told you," she said hastily. "You do. I am sure, whatever I may be, that I am not deceived in you."

I had nothing more to say then. My dream of joy was rudely dispersed. I went out of the room, and in the hall I met Mrs. Luttrell. "Well!" she said eagerly. "My dear Mr. Brandon, it is settled."

"I have not proposed to Miss Deane, if you mean that," I said, brushing past her as quickly as I could. I had been too terribly bruised to resume shape as a polite and well-mannered young man immediately.

I did not see Georgie again until we met at dinner. Judging from her countenance then, she had passed an even harder time of it than I had done. The Luttrells were all cool to her. But she did not seem to heed that coolness very much. She was wrapped up in her own thoughts, and they did not appear to be pleasant ones. In spite of my own bitter disappointment, I did so heartily pity my darling at this crisis of her fate.

The Luttrells had collected the whole county to grace their ball, it seemed to me. It was late before I entered the ball-room, and Sir Percy Holdsworth was the first man to whom Miss Luttrell introduced me. When I saw him I pitied my darling,—my poor misguided, passionate darling,—still more.

He was the perfect type of the effete, conceited man of idleness and fashion,—bland, well-grown, and unutterably selfish and self-satisfied. I knew that he was all these things as soon as we met, and my heart burned within me to think of how unworthy he was of the fate that was offered to him,—the fate that I so coveted.

She came into the ball-room,—that bright fate of mine,—a little later than I did myself. She came in looking so brilliant, so radiant, so beautiful, that more than I was dazzled by her. I saw their meeting. I saw him explaining, and excusing himself, and pleading, and being won by her. Saw it all even more plainly than the Luttrells did, though their vision was sharpened by envy and malice. Further on in the evening, I saw that the fair understanding she had fought for had come about between them. And then I cursed the folly which had made me announce myself in the *Morning Post* as returned to England.

She herself told me the next morning that "it was all settled." "I have got engaged to him again," she said. "At least I never was engaged to him before, but I have passed five years of my life in thinking about him. That is a long time,—a big slice out of a woman's life. It would be a pity to waste it, wouldn't it, Mr. Brandon? He was my beau ideal. When I get used to him, he will be my beau ideal again. Wish me joy,—do!"

I wished her joy honestly, but I could not hope she would have much of it when I saw how indifferently he accepted his good fortune. He came to luncheon with the Luttrells the day after their ball, and gladdened their hearts by making his marriage a secondary consideration to a tour in the East, which he had promised to make the following summer with an artist friend of his.

"While you are away I could teach some little children their A B C," Georgie said, in answer to a surmise of his as to where it would be well for her to sojourn during his absence.

"I suppose you have some friends who could have you to stay with them, haven't you?" he said, complainingly. "If you haven't it will be an awful bore." She had passed me over for love of him, and love of power and revenge; but my heart ached for her as he said this. She was stung, too, by the pleasure the Luttrells could not help showing that they felt at her discomfiture. But I could not help her. She had put herself beyond the pale where my sympathy would have availed her.

Thank Heaven, that Christmas week for which I was bound to Cleve came to an end at last. I said "good-bye" to them all, and she promised me cards and cake when she married. She never told me that she was disappointed in this man for whom she had played so cleverly, so boldly, and with such unfortunate success. She never told me that she was disappointed in him; that the beau ideal of her girlhood was proved a mistake to her now mature judgment. But I knew that she was repenting herself both of her scheme and the success which had attended it, when she gave me her hand in a long, lingering clasp when I bade her "farewell and Godspeed."

I went home to Brandon Lodge sadder, and I fear not wiser, than when I had left it. For a while I tried to interest myself in making

improvements on my estate, but the life was flat and tame, and I soon sickened of it. I passed the spring and summer in a sort of moon-struck idleness, and, at last, when winter was coming on again, I felt that if I would keep either mind or body healthy, I must shake off the associations of last Christmas, and prepare to lead a new life. I believed her married long ago, and always called her Lady Holdsworth to myself.

I went back to Italy, and reached Rome just as the English residents commenced their preparations for passing our great national festival incongruously. "Come and dine with me on Christmas Day," an old friend of mine, a sculptor, said to me. "I have two English ladies,—a rich old widow and her companion,—dining with me that day. The widow is to have my Beatrice Cenci, and the companion appreciates it."

I went in blind ignorance, and I met her again! She was not married.

"After all I did you will despise me when I tell you that I was so disappointed in him that I couldn't help breaking it off," she said to me, flashing fiercely in her old way.

I did not despise her. When we leave Rome the rich old lady will have relinquished all claim to Georgie's services, and I shall be obliged to consult my architect friend about the new rooms at Brandon Lodge after all.

THE RED BOOK OF HERGEST.

Among the literary treasures of Jesus College, Oxford, is a casket containing a folio volume of manuscript, handsomely bound in red morocco, with old-fashioned clasps to correspond. Written in the Welsh language, its contents are of an exceedingly varied, and even nondescript character. As to its precise age no two critics exactly agree, though their differences are, after all, not very considerable. According to M. Hersart de la Villemarqué, who, after the manner of his nation, is somewhat dogmatical, it was begun in 1318 and finished in 1454. With almost equal preciseness Mr. Edward Jones assures us that the folio volume in question was transcribed about the year 1450 from an ancient MS. called *Llyvr Hergest*, by *Llwelyn Glyn Cothi*, the bard of Jasper, Earl of Pembroke. A more trustworthy authority, however, Mr. Edward Llwyd, is content with the comparatively vague statement that it was written about the end of the fourteenth century. In fact, it is simply a compilation of historical, poetical, and romantic specimens of Welsh literature, ranging from the middle of the sixth century down to the latter half of the fourteenth, and was evidently transcribed at different periods.

This very remarkable compilation contains, among other curious stories, the *Ystoria Dared*, or the History of the Trojan War, by *Dares Phrygius*; the *Brut y Brinhinned*, or Chronicles of the Kings of Britain, from the landing of Brutus, the grandson of Ascanius, to the death of Cadwaladr, A.D. 688; the *Brut y Tywysogion*, or Chronicles of the Princes of Wales; the Lamentations over the Britons, by *Gildas*; the Names of the Welsh Cantreds and Commots; the *Ystoria Charlymaen*, or the History of Charlemagne, translated from the Latin by *Madawg Selyf*; *Delw y Byd*, a translation of Henry of Huntingdon's "*Imago Mundi*;" a Chronology from the time of Adam to A.D. 1318; *Cato Cymraeg*, or *Cynghor y Doeth I'w Fab*, a Father's Advice to his Son; *Chwedyl y Seithhyn Doeth*, or Tale of the Seventeen Wise Men, by *Llewelyn Offeiriad*; *Breuddwyd Rhonabwy*, or Dream of Rhonabwy; *Prophwydoliaeth Sibli Ddoeth*, or Prophecies of Sibil the Wise, a daughter of Priam, by *Hecuba*; *Cyfoesi Myrddin a Gwenddydd ei Chwaer*, or a Dialogue between Merlin,—Sylvester,—and his sister,—apparently composed towards the close of the tenth century, and consequently not the production of Merlin himself, as sometimes supposed;—a passage from St. Augustin's writings concerning the "*tewdwr*," or thickness

of the earth; *Prophwydoliaeth yr Eryr Ynghaer* Septon, or Prophecy of an Eagle, &c.; *Enwen y Tri Dynion a Gawsant Garmpeu Adda*, or Names of Three Men who equalled Adam in Wisdom, and of Three Women who equalled Eve in Beauty; *Pan Aeth Llu y Llychlyn*, or Succours sent to Norway; — *Arthur's Death and Burial*; *Trioedd Ynys Brydain*, or Triads of the Islands of Britain; *Trioedd y Meirch*, or of three remarkable horses; *Enwen Ynys Brydain a'i Rhagynysodd*, or Names of the Cities, Rarities, &c., of Britain, and the adjacent Islands; *Ystoria Chyarlys*, or the History of Charlemagne's fabulous journey to Jerusalem and Constantinople; *Chwedyll Iarlles y Ffyn-nawn*, or Story of the Lady of the Fountain; *Ystori Peredur ab Erfrawc*, or History of Peredur, the son of Evrawc; *Breuddwyd Maxen Wledig*, or Dream of the Emperor Maximus; *Cyfrunge Lludd a Llefelys*; *A Mabinogi*, or Juvenile Tale in four parts, namely, *Pwyll Pendevig Dyved*, *Bronwen verch Llŷr*, *Manawyddan fab Llŷr*, and *Math fab Mathonwy*; *Ystori Gereint ab Erbin*; *Ystori Kulhwch ab Kelydd*; *Ystori Bown o Hampten*, a Welsh version of *Sir Bevis of Southampton*; a History of two of Charlemagne's Knights, *Amlyn* and *Amlyc*; the *Brut y Saeson*, or *Saxon Chronicle*; and a Collection of Welsh Proverbs and Welsh Minstrelsy, including the best authenticated poems of *Taliesin* and *Llywarch Hên*.

Many of these pieces are avowedly translations from the Latin and Romance languages, but others are evidently of pure Cymric origin, and abound with allusions to incidents and characters familiar to the bards of Arthur's time. Ritson, indeed, denies the originality of Welsh romance, and maintains that whatever tales of chivalry exist in that tongue were borrowed from the Normans or Provençals, though he appears to entertain some doubt as to whether the story of *Owain ab Urien* may not be genuinely Welsh. Not very much attention, however, need be paid to the opinions of this dogmatic critic, who asserts that the oldest metrical romance of which anything is known is the *Chanson de Roland*, chanted by *Taillefer* at the battle of *Hastings*. He further declares that the Welsh were indebted to *Geoffrey of Monmouth* for the groundwork of their prose literature, thus reversing the order of things, and deriving the fountain from the stream. In the course of the same dissertation he relates how *Robert de Thornton* translated the *Morte d'Arthur* and "*Percyvall of Galles*" from the French, in the reign of *Henry VI.*, and expresses his belief that the adventures of "*Ywain and Gawin*" were first rendered into English under *Richard II.* This may possibly have been the case, but there is at the same time strong evidence in favour of the Cymric origin of the latter two. The *Morte d'Arthur*, indeed, is probably a Breton romance, and therefore Welsh only in the second degree, but few would now question the Welsh paternity of "*Perceval le Gallois*," of the "*Chevalier au Lyon*," or of "*Erec et Enide*." A much higher authority than Ritson has said,

"There is no absurdity in supposing that the scenes and characters of our romantic histories were very generally, though not exclusively, derived from the Bretons or from the Welsh of this island; that much of the colouring, and perhaps some particular adventures may be of Scandinavian origin, and that occasional episodes, together with part of the machinery, may have been borrowed from the Arabians."* In the same spirit Signor Panizzi admits in his fine preface to Ariosto that "all the chivalrous fictions since spread throughout Europe appear to have had their birth in Wales."

It must not be forgotten, however, that the term "Welsh" had originally a far wider signification than it afterwards obtained. It was applied by the Saxons on their first settlement in Thanet to the inhabitants of the rest of the island, much as the Greeks designated as barbarians those who spoke a different tongue to themselves. The word itself means "foreigners," and is equivalent to the Chinese expression of "outside barbarians." Welsh literature, therefore, was not confined to the mountains of Wales. For two centuries after the Saxon invasion, the Britons of Cornwall, Devon, Cambria, the north of England, and far into the interior of Scotland, spoke the same language, and were bound together by the ties of race and affinity. Llywarch Hen, for instance, was the Bard of Urien, of Rheged, whose territories lay chiefly in Cumberland, and yet he is usually celebrated as one of the most eminent Welsh bards. This Cumbrian prince, the brother-in-law of Arthur, was likewise the patron of Taliesin, though the latter is better known in connection with the misfortunes of Elphin, whose principality is said to have occupied the site of the present Bay of Cardigan. Be this as it may, it is certain that in the sixth and seventh centuries of the Christian era the culture of the ancient Britons was far more advanced than writers of the Ritson school appear to be aware, and from this island letters and the romance of chivalry passed over into Armorica, the Bretagne of the French. That the Britons were a polished people as compared with the early Normans is distinctly stated in Basnage's "*Coutoumier*," in which we read that Rollo held out every inducement to the Bretons to settle among his people in order to civilise and refine them. In addition to this, we have the direct testimony of Giraldus Cambrensis, and of William of Malmesbury, to the existence in their time of Cambrian histories, genealogies, and tales, which the successors of the bards had committed to writing, though in simple prose, the rhythm being no longer needed to aid the memory. Henry II., we are told, took, or affected to take, great pleasure in listening to these romantic histories,—the Plantagenets generally being favourably disposed towards the Welsh minstrels, who pretended that Merlin had predicted the coming of the Normans.

* Mr. G. Ellis's Introduction to the "Early English Metrical Romances."

to avenge upon the Saxon oppressors the wrongs done by them upon the vanquished and suffering Britons.

In a happy hour Lady Charlotte Elizabeth Guest was moved to render into English a dozen of the most striking romances contained in the *Llyfr Coch o Hergest*,—the Red Book of Hergest. It is to be regretted, indeed, that the translation is somewhat too free and grandiloquent, nor is the title of “*Mabinogion*” quite suitable to the entire collection. The word signifies Juvenile Tales, or Juvenile Instruction, referring, of course, to high-born youths, who alone were thought worthy of account in those days. In the Red Book only four tales are comprised under the collective title of “*Mabinogi*,” namely, *Pwyll*, Prince of Dyved or Demetia; *Bronwen*, daughter of Lear; *Manawyddan*, the son of Lear; and *Math*, the son of *Mathonwy*. Of the others, two are devoted to the exposition of the dreams of *Rhonabwy* and the Emperor *Maximus*; four are narratives of adventures encountered by Knights of Arthur’s Court,—to wit, the Lady of the Fountain; *Peredur*, the son of *Evrawc*; *Gereint*, the son of *Erbin*; and *Kulhwch* and *Olwen*; the story of *Llud* and *Llweyllys*; and, lastly, the comparatively modern history of *Taliesin* and *Elphin*. We commence with the four Arthurian romances.

The *Iarlles y Ffynawn*, or Lady of the Fountain, is clearly the groundwork of *Chrestien de Troyes*’ metrical romance,—the *Chevalier au Lyon*,—which was subsequently turned into English under the title of *Ywayne* and *Gawin*, and republished by *Ritson*. This *Ywayne*, the *Sir Ivain* of the French romance writers, is identical with *Owain ab Urien*, Prince of *Rheged*, while *Gawin* is the *Gwalchmai ab Gwyar* of the Welsh bards, by whom he is characterised as “the honey-tongued.” *Gwalchmai*, which is by interpretation “the Hawk of Battle,” was first latinised into *Walganus* and *Walweyn*, and thence corrupted into the French *Gawain*. Queen *Guenever* appears under her original appellation of *Gwenhwyvar*, though it is impossible to tell to which of Arthur’s three queens,—who all went by that name,—allusion is here made. According to the *Triads*, the “blameless king” did not keep himself altogether unspotted from the world, for, in addition to his three wives, he is said also to have had three mistresses. Another of the characters in this tale is the damsel *Luned*, whose ring,—which had the property, when the stone was turned inward, of rendering the wearer invisible,—is enumerated by *Mr. Edward Jones* among the *Thirteen Curiosities of the Island of Britain*, which *Merlin* is supposed to have carried off to *Bardsey Island*. The similarity of this ring with that of *Gyges* has more than once been pointed out. The second Arthurian romance, that of *Peredur*, the son of *Evrawc*, is remarkable as having originated the interminable history of the Quest of the *Sangreal*. The authentic “*Peredur of steel arms*,” is celebrated by *Aneurin* among the heroes who fell at the battle of *Cattraeth*, about the middle of the sixth century. The

French version was commenced by Chrestien de Troyes at the request of Philip of Alsace, Count of Flanders, and contains many more incidents than are to be found in the original. There is also a prose history of the Très Preulx et Vaillant Cheuallier Perceual le Galloys Jadis Cheuallier de la Table Rôde, closely copied from the preceding, but terminating differently. In the latter, Perceval succeeds to the priceless possessions of his uncle, "le roy Peschor,"—the fisherman king,—which consisted of the Saint Greal, the Holy Lance, and the "digne tailloir dargêt," which appears to refer to another of the Thirteen Curiosities,—the knife of Llawfrodded Farchawg,—which would carve for four-and-twenty guests at the same time. The last years of his life were spent by this favoured knight in prayer and penance, no food passing his lips save what was spontaneously supplied by the Saint Greal; and, when at last he died and was buried, the following epitaph was placed over his head:—"Cy gist Perceual le Galloys, qui du Saint Graalles aduentures acheva." This prose narrative appeared about the year 1529, whereas the metrical romance begun by Chrestien de Troyes, and continued by Gauthier de Denet, was completed by Manessier about the close of the twelfth century. It was divided into fifty-one chapters, and contains some 50,000 lines. In the English romance,—transcribed, if not translated, by Robert de Thornton, a monk of the fifteenth century, and the only copy of which now extant is preserved in the library of Lincoln Cathedral,—Perceval is described as nephew to Arthur by his sister Acheflour, and rescues and marries Lafamour, Queen of Maidenland. The story was early rendered into German from the French by Wolfram von Eschenbach, but differs considerably from the Welsh original, in incidents, as well as in names. There is also an Icelandic Saga dedicated to the adventures of this paragon of knights.

The Welsh paternity of this remarkable romance is easily traceable. The Saint Greal of the French copyists is the cup that was used at the Last Supper, and which Joseph of Arimathea brought over into Britain filled with the blood of the Saviour, as it poured from the wound inflicted by the spear of the Roman soldier Longus. This cup subsequently disappeared, and could only be seen by a knight of faultless conduct, and him it provided with all manner of things good to eat and drink. In the German story this cup was a diamond which fell from Satan's crown when the archangel was worsted in fight by St. Michael. It was afterwards hollowed into the shape of a cup by the angel who comforted the Saviour in the garden of Gethsemane with the nectar of heaven. It then passed into the hands of Joseph, and so came into the possession of his descendant, the Roi Pêcheur. Every year, on Good Friday, a white dove descended from on high, and deposited in the cup a consecrated wafer. By Taliesin, however, the Gradal, or Graal, is described as a large shallow dish,

which had the property of inspiring poetic genius, wisdom, and knowledge of the future and of all mysteries. Its rim was adorned with a row of pearls and diamonds. More simply, this basin was a divining cup of the Druids, and disappeared with Merlin. Peredur's name, curiously enough, signifies in Welsh the Companion of the Basin, and, as already stated, he was a friend and contemporary of Aneurin, whose identity with Gildas is generally recognised. The bleeding lance was also a Bardic symbol subsequent to the Saxon invasion, and betokened undying hatred to those usurpers. The true meaning of this legend was naturally lost upon Chrestien de Troyes, whose ingenuity was exerted to convert a graceful myth into a ridiculous romance.

The third story is that of Gereint ab Erbin, a chieftain of Dyvnaint, who fell at the disastrous battle of Llongborth, and was afterwards canonised. The "*Erec et Enide*" of Chrestien de Troyes is a tolerably close adaptation of this beautiful tale, except that the hero is the son of King Lac, and imposes upon himself an adventurous career as a penance for his indolence, but without having any suspicion of the truth and loyalty of Enide. From the French it was rendered into German, and thence into Icelandic. In more modern times the genius of Tennyson has invested the loving and devoted character of Enid with an interest which no cultivated mind would care to criticise too closely. For the rest, the Laureate has copied almost verbally the Welsh narrative of the adventures of the "tributary prince of Devon" and the beautiful daughter of Earl Yniwl.

The fourth story is in many respects unique. It is entitled "*Ystori Kulhwch ac Olwen, neu Hanes y Twrch Trwyth*," that is, the history of Kulhwch and Olwen, or the Twrch Trwyth. The precise meaning of this extravaganza, if it ever had any, is not very easy to decipher. Of its purely British origin, however, there can be no question. To this day numerous hills, rivers, and dales in Wales are associated with the leading incidents and characters mentioned in this wild and incomprehensible legend. It is a singular, and even monstrous fiction, and must have sorely taxed the memories of its reciters. A dim outline is all that we can pretend to trace.

Kelydd, son of Prince Kelyddon, took to wife Goleuddydd, daughter of Prince Anlawdd. This princess, having conceived, became insane, and wandered about over the mountains. As her time approached she fell in with a herd of swine, when the terror caused by these animals restored her to her mind, but hastened the birth of a son, who was christened Kulhwch, because found in a sow's burrow. Some time afterwards Goleuddydd fell sick, and on her death-bed forbade her husband again to marry until he should see upon her grave a briar with two blossoms, at the same time exacting from him a promise that he would not allow anything to grow there. For seven years the princely widower was true to his pledge, sending

every morning one of his followers to root up whatever green thing showed itself above the surface. At the end of that period, however, he became somewhat remiss, so that, passing his wife's grave one day while out hunting, he observed a briar in full blossom. Thereupon he resolved to seek another wife, and with that view invaded the territory of King Doged, whom he put to death, and whose wife and daughter he carried off into captivity. The latter became his consort, and after a time learned from an old crone that the prince had not only been previously married, but had a son alive and grown up. Upbraiding her husband for his want of faith in her affection, she sends for her stepson, and tells him that it is his destiny to espouse Olwen, daughter of Yspaddaden Penkawr. "And the youth blushed, and the love of the maiden diffused itself through all his frame, although he had never seen her." His sire accordingly sent him to Arthur's court, bidding him to require of the king that he should cut his hair, and thereby adopt him as his godson. His mother, Goleuddydd, it seems, was half-sister to Arthur's mother, the fair Eigr or Ygraine, and, consequently, the youth was entitled to claim kindred with the hero.

Gallantly equipped, and armed with two spears "headed with steel, three ells in length, of an edge to wound the wind and cause blood to flow," Kullwch arrived at Arthur's palace and demanded admittance, which was at first flatly refused. "The knife is in the meat, and the drink is in the horn, and there is revelry in Arthur's hall," replied the porter; "and none may enter therein but the son of a king of a privileged country, or a craftsman bringing his craft." The stranger is assured, however, that abundant provision shall be made for his horse and his hounds, and that he himself shall be entertained with "collops cooked and peppered, and luscious wine, and mirthful songs;" and, moreover, that "a lady shall smooth thy couch and lull thee with songs." But Kullwch treats this tempting offer with contempt, and threatens, if the door be not instantly opened, to utter three such dreadful shouts that every woman with child shall miscarry, and all others remain barren for ever. This calamity is averted by Arthur's courtesy, who bids the porter admit the stranger, and sets before him skewered collops and drink until dinner can be got ready for him.

Kullwch then rides into the hall, and declines to sit down, but begs of the king to bless his hair. "And Arthur took a golden comb and scissors, whereof the loops were of silver, and he combed his hair." On the completion of that ceremony, Kullwch reveals his name and lineage, and asks of Arthur the hand of Olwen, at the same time praying each of his knights by name to aid in the enterprise. To many of these knights very marvellous attributes are ascribed. One possessed a short, broad dagger of such virtue, that when Arthur's army was stopped in its march by a ravine, it was laid

across in its sheath, and all passed over. Another would enter a town, and though it might contain three hundred houses, he would let no man sleep until he had obtained what he wanted. A third, when sent upon a message, would run over the tops of the trees, his step being so light that "during his whole life a blade of reed-grass bent not beneath his feet." A fourth, being in Cornwall, could see a gnat rise in the morning with the sun far away in the north of Britain. A fifth could stand all day upon one foot, and never weary. A sixth, as he hurried along, struck sparks of fire with his feet from the hard rocks. A seventh could suck up a sea in which three hundred ships were afloat, and of him it is remarked that "he was broad-chested." An eighth, when sad, let his lower-lip drop below his waist, while he turned his upper-lip over his head like a cap. Another would spread his red, untrimmed beard over the eight-and-forty rafters of Arthur's hall. Yet another, though buried seven cubits underground, could hear an ant, fifty miles off, rise from her nest in the morning. Then, Bedwyr or Bedivere, though one-handed, had a lance which was as fatal as nine ordinary lances. Menw was skilled in glamour, and could make himself and companions invisible, while they themselves saw plainly. Gwalchmai never commenced an adventure that he did not accomplish. Another knew every tongue that was spoken upon earth; while Kai could go nine days and nights without closing his eyes, besides being able to elongate himself to the height of the tallest trees, and a wound inflicted by his sword was incurable.

All these doughty warriors readily promise to give their aid, but at the end of twelve months the affair remains where it was. No one had ever heard of Olwen, or knew aught of her existence. Thereupon Kulhwch flies into a furious passion, and threatens to proclaim to all the world the pusillanimity of Arthur and his knights. This sally produces the desired effect. A party of six at once set forth, and after encountering many adventures, familiar to readers of chivalric romances, at last discover and penetrate into the castle of Yspaddaden Penkawr. There they beheld Olwen, "clothed in a robe of flame-coloured silk, and about her neck was a collar of ruddy gold, on which were precious emeralds and rubies. More yellow was her head than the flower of the broom, and her skin was whiter than the foam of the wave, and fairer were her hands than the blossom of the wood anemone amidst the spray of the meadow fountain. The eye of the trained hawk, the glance of the three-mewed falcon, was not brighter than hers. Her bosom was more snowy than the breast of the white swan; her cheek was redder than the reddest roses. Whoso beheld her was filled with her love. Four white trefoils sprang up wherever she trod. And therefore was she called Olwen." *

* The literal meaning of the word is "white tracks," and in Welsh minstrelsy "Olwen" represents the productive power of nature.

Yspaddaden, on being invited in Arthur's name to cede his daughter in marriage to Kulhweh, refuses to do so, even should the suitor succeed in performing all the impossible feats which are prescribed as proofs of his sincerity. The most arduous enterprise of all was to get possession of the comb and scissors that were between the ears of Twrch Trwyth, son of Tared. This Twrch Trwyth was a fierce boar that had ravaged a large portion of Ireland, and which, being pursued by Arthur's host, swam across St. George's Channel, devastated Wales, slew the mightiest warriors that opposed him, and finally rushed into the sea from the coast of Cornwall, after losing its seven piglings one by one. Kulhweh, of course, ultimately wins the hand of Olwen, and her father is beheaded, after having his cheeks sliced off.

The Dream of Rhonabwy comes next in order. Having laid himself down upon a piece of yellow calf-skin on the dirty floor of a filthy hovel, Rhonabwy dreams that he is conducted to Arthur's presence by Iddawc Cordd Prydain, the false knight who brought on the fatal battle of Camlan by falsifying Arthur's loving messages to his nephew Medrawd. Seven years of penance at last won Iddawc pardon and peace. When Rhonabwy and his two companions appeared before Arthur, "the Emperor smiled," and said,—“It pitieth me that men of such stature as these should have this island in their keeping, after the men that guarded it of yore.”

The sixth story is entitled, Pwyll Pendevig Dyved, or Pwyll, Prince of Demetia. After certain preliminary adventures Pwyll marries Rhiannon, who, in due time, is delivered of a male child. While the mother slept, the attendant women, forgetful of their duty, also indulged in sleep, and on awaking missed the babe. To conceal their remissness they killed some staghound cubs that were in the apartment, and smeared Rhiannon's face and hands with blood, strewing her couch also with small bones from which the flesh had been cut away. They then accused her of having eaten her own child, and the people demanded that she should be put to death. Pwyll, however, spared her life; but enjoined as a penance that she should sit all day on the horse-block at the door of the palace, and carry in upon her shoulders whoever should please to command her services. This incident, by the way, somewhat reminds one of Dr. Dasent's Norse tale of "The Twelve Wild Ducks."

One of Pwyll's dependants was the lord of Gwent Is Coed, who owned a mare of extraordinary power and beauty. On the eve of every May-day this mare brought a foal into the world, which disappeared before the dawn. So at last the valiant knight resolved to watch over the mare himself. At the usual hour the noble animal produced her foal, and while the knight was admiring its strength and stature, a monstrous claw was thrust through the window, and grasped

the foal by the mane. In an instant the knight's falchion severed the arm in twain, and a loud moaning was heard. He rushed out,—

“Deep into the darkness peering,
But the silence was unbroken, and the stillness gave no token.”

Returning to the door, he beheld upon the threshold “an infant boy in swaddling clothes, wrapped around in a mantle of satin.” At the end of four years he recognised the child's likeness to Pwyll, and took him to his parents, who gave him the name of Pryderi, which signifies care or anxiety. This is the first portion of the tale called “*Mabinogi*” in the Red Book of Hergest.

The second portion relates how Bronwen, or “the white-bosomed,” daughter of King Lear, and sister of Bendigeid Vran, or Bran the Blessed,—so called because he introduced Christianity into this island,—was wooed and won by Matholwch, king of Ireland. That chieftain, however, avenged upon Bronwen an affront he had received from her brother Eonissyen, and made her cook for the court, the butcher boxing her ears every day after cutting up the meat. The unhappy queen, after enduring these insults for three years, reared a starling in her kneading-trough, and after teaching the bird what manner of man was her brother Bran, wrote a letter and concealed it under one of its wings. The starling found out Bran, and, ruffling its plumage, disclosed the letter. A fleet was forthwith equipped, and the warriors of the Island of the Mighty were rapidly conveyed across the waters. Bran himself was of such Titanic mould that he waded across the channel. The Irish fled from the giant to the other side of a river, at the bottom of which was a loadstone, so that no ship could float on the surface. Bran, however, overcame this difficulty by lying down across the river, and his army marched over his body as over a bridge. Peace was therefore made, but with treacherous designs on the part of the Irish; and on their disloyalty being discovered a dreadful contest ensued. For a time the Irish seemed likely to gain the victory through the marvellous properties of a cauldron which Bran had formerly presented to Matholwch. Whatever dead men were thrown into it in the evening were fit to bear arms on the morrow, though speech was denied them. Eonissyen, seeing this, threw himself down among the enemy as if he were dead, and was picked up by two “unshod Irishmen” and thrown into the cauldron, when, stretching himself out to his full length, he rent it into four pieces, but burst his own heart. In the end, Bronwen also died of a broken heart. Of the Irish only five women survived, all of whom were safely delivered of sons; and these, on arriving at maturity, married each a comrade's mother, and founded a kingdom. On the part of the conquerors others still remained, but Bran had been wounded in the foot by a poisoned arrow. He therefore bade his seven associates cut off his head, and bury it beneath the White Mount in London, facing towards

France. So long as that head was left undisturbed, no foreigners dared to set foot in Britain; but Arthur had it taken up, because he scorned to hold the island by other aid than that of his own good sword.

Of the third portion of the "Mabinogi," which relates to Manawyddan, the son of Lear, it is needless to say more than that it describes a series of magical illusions, through which the seven Cantreys of Dywed appear to turn into thickets infested by wild beasts, and Pryderi and Rhiannon are retained in bondage for awhile. As a tale of magic the story of Manawyddan vab Llyr is perhaps the best in the whole collection, though not so wonderful or so varied in its details as the fourth and concluding portion, entitled "Math, the son of Mathonwy," a translation of which appeared in "The Cambrian Quarterly Magazine and Celtic Repository," vol. i., 1829.

The Breuddwyd Maxen Wledig tells how the Emperor Maximus when out hunting in the neighbourhood of Rome, attended by thirty-two kings, his vassals, was overcome by sleep, and saw in a dream his future Empress, Helen Luyddawg, or Helen of the Mighty Hosts. In due time he discovers the fair one in the Isle of Anglesea, and tarries seven years in Britain making roads and building castles. During his absence, however, an usurper establishes himself on the throne; and Maximus, after subduing France, Burgundy, and all other intermediate lands, sat down before the walls of Rome for a whole year. Suddenly a mighty host arrived to his aid under the command of Helen's brother, and stormed the city while the Romans were engaged with their midday meal. After this exploit the greater portion of this valiant army settled in Armorica, having first exterminated the men and cut out the tongues of the women, lest they should corrupt their pure British speech.

One of the most extravagant stories translated by Lady Charlotte Guest is the Gyfranc Lludd a Llenelîs. Lludd was the brother of Cassibelaunus, and founded Caerlud, the modern London, and placed his brother Llevelys, or Lewis, upon the throne of France. At that time the island of Britain was tormented by three plagues. The first was that of the Coranians,* who knew everything and heard every word that was said, so that they got the better of everybody. The second was a shriek on May Eve so fearful that the leaves fell from the trees, the men lost all strength and vigour, and the women were stricken with sterility. The third affected the king rather than the people. No matter what amount of provisions was stored away in the king's courts, in the course of a single night the whole supply disappeared.

Distracted by these national and private woes, Lludd crossed the channel to consult his brother. To baffle the prying Coranians the brothers conversed through a long brass horn, after pouring some wine into it to drive out a demon who distorted their words. Llevelys

* These Coranians evidently allude to the Coraniaid, who came from Pwyll (Poland?), and settled to the north of the Humber.

then gave Lludd some insects which he was to bruise into water, and having called all his people together, was to sprinkle them with the mixture. This was done, and the Coranians were all killed. The shriek, it seems, was caused by two dragons that fought every May Eve over the central spot of the island. This turned out to be Oxford, and there Lludd prepared a huge cauldron of mead, which he covered over with a piece of satin. The next May Eve, in the course of their contest, the dragons tumbled into the cauldron, and, drinking up all the mead, fell fast asleep. In that condition they were put into a stone chest, and buried deep underground at Dinas Emrys, where unhappily they were discovered and released by Merlin. Had they been allowed to remain there undisturbed, the Saxons would never have held the mastery in Britain. The third plague was as easily overcome, though with greater personal peril. Having caused a grand banquet to be prepared, Lludd dismissed his attendants and kept vigil all alone. To shake off the drowsiness that oppressed him, by reason of songs and other fascinations, he got into a vessel of cold water which he provided for the purpose through his brother's foresight. At length, when the night was far advanced, a man in armour and of gigantic proportions entered the apartment with an enormous hamper on his shoulders. Into this he packed away not only the viands, but also the dishes and goblets, and whatever else had been placed upon the table. But as he was about to depart with his plunder, Lludd emerged from his bath and gave battle. The giant was of course overcome, and the island was freed from its three plagues.

The last of Lady Charlotte Guest's translation, the "*Hanes Taliesin*," has evidently been written at two widely different times. The introduction is probably modern,—that is to say, it was written in the fourteenth century; while the poetic pieces that are inserted date back some hundreds of years previous to that date. It may here be mentioned that the more ancient portion was translated by Dr. Owen Pughe, and published in the "*Cambrian Quarterly*." *Taliesin* is an historical character, and flourished about the middle of the sixth century. The story is to the following effect:—

Ceridwen, the goddess of Nature, desired to boil the cauldron of "*Awen*," or Inspiration, for the benefit of one of her sons who was hideously ugly. The mixture must boil for a year and a day, in order to obtain the three blessed drops. Gwion Bach and the blind Morda were instructed to watch the cauldron, stirring it from time to time, and supplying fuel to the flames, while Ceridwen busied herself in culling rare herbs. One day, towards the end of the year, three drops spurted out on Gwion's finger, which he hastily applied to his lips to allay the pain. The future was revealed to him, and he knew that Ceridwen was his mortal enemy. The cauldron at the same

moment burst, and its contents were spilt upon the ground, and, running into a stream hard by, poisoned the horses of Gwyddno Garanhir. Then Gwion fled far away, pursued by Ceridwen. When he changed into a hare, she became a greyhound bitch; when he turned into a fish, she turned into an otter; when he rose into the air as a bird, she soared aloft as a hawk; when he suddenly dropped into a heap of winnowed corn, and hid himself in the form of a grain of wheat, his persecutrix transformed herself into "a high-crested hen," and, scratching diligently, found the animated grain and swallowed it.* At the expiration of nine months Ceridwen was delivered of a male child so beautiful that she could not find it in her heart to kill him; so she enclosed the babe in a leathern bag and cast him into the sea on May Eve.

Now, the weir of Gwyddno Garanhir, which was situated between Dyvi and Aberystwith, was always dragged on that evening, and never yielded less than £100 worth of fish. On this occasion he presented beforehand whatever should be caught to his son Elphin, who had failed in everything he had undertaken. The weir was accordingly dragged as usual, but not a single fish was there within the nets. As Elphin was moodily departing, an attendant espied the leathern bag, and, looking into it, exclaimed, "Lo! a radiant brow!" "Taliesin let him be called," answered Elphin, for that is the meaning of the word Taliesin. The child was then lifted on his horse, and, as he rode sorrowing home, begun to console him in verses suitable to the occasion. Not unreasonably astonished at such precocity, Elphin asks him if he is a human being or a fiend; to which Taliesin replies by recounting all the transformations he had passed through since he was Gwion Bach, and convinces him that he has found a treasure more precious than ever so large a haul of fish. For thirteen years the future "King of the Bards" is nurtured by Elphin's spouse, a lady of great beauty and virtue, at the end of which period that chieftain is invited to spend Christmas-tide at the court of his uncle, Maelgwn Gwynedd. There he gives great offence by maintaining that he has the most virtuous wife and the most skilful bard in the whole world, and is thrown into prison with a silver chain round his ankle. In the end, Maelgwn Gwynedd is brought to admit the truth of his nephew's assertions, the lady and the bard triumphing over all their enemies.†

* How closely does all this resemble the transformations of the second Royal Calendar, who was a king's son, in the Arabian Nights.

† A clever and amusing tale called "The Misfortunes of Elphin," and published by Mr. Hookham in 1829, embodies with much ingenuity the legends relating to that prince, and the submersion of his territories through the remission of "drunken Seithenyn."

QUIA MULTUM AMAVIT.

I.

Just a drowned woman, with death-draggled hair,
And wan eyes, all a-stare ;
The weary limbs composed in ghastly rest,
The hands together prest,
Tight holding something that the flood has spared,
Nor even the rough workhouse folk have dared
To separate from her wholly, but untied
Gently the knotted hands, and laid it by her side.

II.

A piteous sight,—yet not without some sign
Of handiwork divine ;
Some faint, mysterious traces of content
About the brows, unbent
At last from toil and misery,—some mark
Of child-like, tired composure in the stark,
Wan features, on whose calm there is imprest
At last the seal of rest.

III.

See, she was fair,—and now she's rid of strife,
She's comelier than in life ;
For death has smoothed the tresses of her hair
And stroked the lines of care,
With no ungentle hand, from off her brow.
She seems at peace at last,—no matter how.
Death has been angel-sweet to her tired soul,—
She has no need of dole.

IV.

You know her story ? Just the sad, old tale,
Whose victims never fail !
Common enough and mean, but yet not quite
Without its gleam of light ;
Not all devoid of some redeeming spark
Of nobleness to lighten its grim dark.
You turn away. You've heard of many such ?
"She was so wicked !" But she loved so much !

V.

I tell you, this poor woman you despise,
 From whom you turn your eyes,
 Loved with an ardour, side by side with which
 Our lives, so seeming rich
 In virtues and in grandeurs, fade away
 Into the dusk, as night before the day.
 Yet of her life you fear to hear me tell.
 "She was so wicked!" But she loved so well!

VI.

You saw the portrait taken from her grasp,
 Stiffened in Death's cold clasp?
 Two little children, poorly clad and plain,
 Sun-scorched and worn with pain,
 Wan with mean cares, too early for their years,
 Their child-eyes eager with unchildish fears,
 And weary, bitter yearnings. "But a smutch!"
 You say, "And after all its nought to me
 What was her life and what her hopes might be.
 She was so wicked!" Oh! she loved so much!

VII.

True, a mere daub, whereon the beneficent sun
 Has written, in faint, dun,
 Unbeauteous lines, a hard and narrow life,
 Wherein dull care was rife;
 And little thought of beauty or delight
 Relieved the level blackness of the night.
 And yet I would not change those pictured two
 For all the cherubs Raphael ever drew.

VIII.

Two little faces, plain enough to you,
 Nothing of bright or new;
 Such faces as one meets amongst each crowd,
 Sharp-visaged and low-browed.
 And yet to her, her picture-books of heaven,—
 The treasures from which the scanty leaven,
 Wherewith she stirred her poor, mean life to joy,
 Was drawn,—pure gold for her without alloy.

IX.

They were her all, and by no sacred tie,
 No pure maternity.
 To her the name of wife had been denied.
 In sin she lived and died.

She was an outlaw from the pale of right,
And yet there was that in her had such might,
That she would not have shamed our dear Lord Christ.
She loved and that sufficed.

X.

They were her shame and pride, her hope and fear,
To her how dreadly dear
We scarce can feel. You happy, virtuous wives,
Whose quiet, peaceful lives
Flow on, unstirred by misery or crime,
Can have no thought how high these souls can climb
For love ;—with what a weird, unearthly flame
These wretched mothers love their babes of shame ;
How they can suffer for them, dull and mean
As they may be, and sell their souls to screen
Their darlings, dealing out their heart's best blood,
Drop after drop, to buy them daily food.

XI.

And so for years she toiled for them, as none
Could ever toil, save one
Who had nought else to care for, night and day,
Until her hair grew gray
With labour such as souls in Dante's hell
Might have been bound to, and with fiends as fell
To act as her taskmasters, and compel
The poor, thin fingers ;—yet was honest still
For many a weary day and night, until
She found, with aching heart and pain-crazed head,
Her toil could not suffice to earn her children bread.

XII.

They were her all ;—and she, ground down by want,
With hollow eyes and gaunt,
Saw but their misery, small beside her own,
Heard but their hungry moan,—
Could not endure their piteous looks, and sold
Herself to infamy, to warm their cold,
To feed their hunger and assuage their thirst ;—
Not hers. And yet, folks say, she is accurst !

XIII.

Cruel as fate was, there was yet in store
More pain for her, and more
Fierce anguish. Famine and the plague combined,
In league with her own kind,

To steal from her her one source of content.
 The one faint gleam of higher things, that blent
 Its glimmer with her life's unbroken grey,—
 The one pale star, that turned her night to day,
 Sank in the chill of death's delivering wave,
 Extinguished in the grave.

XIV.

Not even the omnipotence of Love
 Had power to rise above
 The sullen, stern, unpitying sweep of Fate,
 That left her desolate.
 O wretched mother! Wretched time of ours!
 When all enlightenment's much-vaunted powers
 To save this Magdalen's all could only fail;—
 When Love has no avail!

XV.

Starved even to death! For this she'd sold her soul,
 This was her striving's goal!
 Life had no longer aught that might suffice
 To hallow all its dreary want and vice.
 Nothing but death remained to her, the crown
 Of all whose lives are hopeless. So fell down
 Her star of life into the dusk of night,
 And she gave up the fight.

XVI.

So calm and peaceful seemed the dark, grey flood,
 Foul with much human blood!
 God help her! Death was kinder than the world,
 And the dusk waters whirled
 A moment o'er a circling splash, and then
 She was forgotten from the world of men,
 And it was nought to her what folk might say.
 Quiet at last she lay!

XVII.

I know not if this poor soul's martyrdom
 For you be wholly dumb.
 To me, I own, her sin seems holier far
 Than modern virtues are.
 For hers was of that ore which, purged of dross,
 Yields gold that might have gilded Christ's own cross,
 And He have smiled. And yet you fear her touch?
 "She was so wicked!" But she loved so much!

XVIII.

And of her common, mean, and awful fate
Our righteous ones will prate,—
A fruitful text for homily!—until
Another come to fill
Her vacant place. And yet none see the bloom
Of love, that opened in her life's blank gloom
And made it angel-bright. Folk turn aside
And know not how a martyr lived and died.

XIX.

"Accursed," say they, "is the suicide.
In sin she lived and died.
We have in her, and she in us, no part.
Our lives, thank heaven! dispart.
At least we're holier than she." Alas!
My brethren, when reflected in God's glass,
It doubts me much if many of our lives
Will, when the day of reckoning arrives,
Or all our virtues, with her sin compare,
Or as her life be fair!

XX.

Even grim Death was pitiful to her,
Her rest he did not stir.
Shall we be, who with her drew common breath,
Less pitiful than Death?
We, who have heard how Christ once lived and died,
With whom His love is fabled to abide,
Shall we avoid a poor dead sinner's touch?
So wicked, say we? Oh! she loved so much.

XXI.

For me, I cannot hold her life's long pain
To have been all in vain.
I cannot think that God will let her go,
After this life of woe;—
Cannot believe that He, whose deathless love
She aped so well, will look on from above,
With careless righteousness, while she sinks down
Into hell's depths, and with a pious frown
Leave her to struggle in the devil's clutch!
True, she was wicked;—but she loved so much!

J. P.

URBAN GRANDIER.

A FRENCH RECORD OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.

A VARIETY of curious cases of contagious hallucinations and epidemic delusion and nervous malady have recently been made public, and have served to increase very largely the number of well-attested facts which science needs for the examination and elucidation of one of the most mysterious and least understood chapters of the natural history of man. But the extraordinary story which it is intended to tell succinctly in the following pages cannot be offered as any contribution to the store of the philosophic physician intent on any such investigation;—save, indeed, as it may serve to furnish a warning as to the extreme caution with which the alleged facts of such cases ought to be received, and as to the amount of “undeniable” evidence which may be brought forward in favour of statements wholly unfounded in fact. But as a specimen of the old French jurisprudence and of the social condition of France in the seventeenth century, the story of the “Devils of Loudon” is of the highest curiosity and interest. Loudon is a small town situated about thirty miles to the south-west of Tours, and at the time to which the following history belongs, in this little country town, with its population of under five thousand souls, the Church was represented by two capitular bodies, three parish churches, an establishment of Jesuits, three other monastic houses, as many convents of nuns, besides a sisterhood of “*Filles de l'Union Chrétienne*,” and another of “*Sœurs Hospitalières*.”

The events here to be related all accomplished themselves on that small theatre, and they take us back to the time when Louis XIII. was reigning in his half imbecile old age, and when Cardinal Richelieu, the all-powerful minister, was engaged in securing and solidifying his conquest over the great nobles, and completing the despotic power of the crown. In 1620 the reverend Urban Grandier was the incumbent of one of the three parishes of Loudon. It was in the presentation of the College of Jesuits of Poitiers, and had been given to Grandier by those fathers at the instance of their fellow religionists in Bordeaux, in whose house Grandier had been educated, and who had had reason to think him a young man of much promise.

There seems in fact to be no doubt,—since both parties to the disputes which subsequently gathered around his name, admit thus much,—that the young parish priest was markedly superior to the generality of his fellows. We are told that he excelled as a preacher;

and a funeral sermon by him on the celebrated Scévole de Ste. Marthe is extant, which so good a judge as Menage declares to be marked by genuine eloquence. We are told, further, that he was a tall and handsome man, that his manners and bearing were notably elegant and courtly, and that it was his habit to pay much more attention to the niceness of his person and to his dress than was usually the case with those of his profession and sphere of life. To this it may be added that he was distinguished by a certain calm and resolute boldness, which might have stood him in better stead, had his lot been other than that of a Churchman. But here ends the catalogue of his good qualities. That of his defects is quite as long, and may be written down as little doubtingly as the former; for here, too, the testimony of his friends and enemies is in accord. He was proud, haughty, and boastful; insolent and provocative to his adversaries, though of agreeable conversation with his friends. He seems to have held views as to matters of Church discipline that were certainly lax and unorthodox, and to have been far from prudent in the expression of them. And besides all this, his course of life in all matters pertaining to the other sex was confessedly immoral. It is well, however, that the reader should remember, as bearing upon this part of Urban Grandier's character and its influence on his history, the exceeding immorality generally prevalent at that day in France, both among the clergy and the laity. Thus we find it assigned openly as the cause of the enmity towards him of a certain fellow-priest of the town, that Grandier was the favoured rival of the latter in the affections of a lady of the place. And the course of the story will show that all Grandier's irregularities would not have brought much trouble upon him, had he given the world around him no other cause of offence.

He did, however, give offence from his very first appearance in London. He did not belong to the province, and this was an offence to the native clergy, who thought that the benefice bestowed on him ought to have been given to one of themselves. Then before long he was appointed to a canonry in one of the chapters, and the outcry against the interloper was greater than ever. The indications of hostile feeling became more open; and Grandier was not slow to reply to all who manifested them with haughty defiance and insolent provocation.

In 1620 Grandier was in litigation for some cause with another priest of the town, one Mounier, in the ecclesiastical court of the Bishop of Poitiers. The young protégé of the Poitiers Jesuits gained his cause, and thereupon triumphed with such insolence over Mounier, that he made all the friends of the latter his bitter enemies. Shortly afterwards he was engaged in litigation with his own chapter, and specially with one of his brother canons named Mignon. Again Grandier was victorious, and again insolently triumphant, at the cost of creating for himself a fresh host of enemies,—very dangerous

ones this time, for Canon Mignon was the nephew of Trinquant who was the Procureur du Roi, and also of President Barot who was a very great man at Loudon,—rich and influential. But when Barot on one occasion testified his displeasure at Grandier's conduct towards his nephew, the proud priest treated him as if he were the mud under his feet. And as if all this were not enough, Trinquant, as Aubin, the author of a detailed history of the whole of the facts to be here related, informs us, "Trinquant, the Procureur du Roi, had a daughter, whom Grandier had visited too familiarly. She became ill and languishing. She had an intimate friend, named Marthe le Pelletier, a poor girl, whom she engaged to be with her during this time of languor and illness. This friend was so faithful and affectionate, that at the expense of her own reputation she charged herself with the child, and took upon herself to find a nurse for it, all which did not prevent the public from understanding perfectly well that the child was the child of her who had been for a while so ill and withdrawn from society." What the feelings of Procureur du Roi Trinquant towards this parish priest must have been may be easily imagined. Well may the historian say, "it was not only rivals that he, Grandier, had to fear, but the fathers and husbands outraged and furious at the bad reputation which his frequent visits brought upon their families." These are the remarks and statements of a writer, avowedly a strong partizan of Grandier, as regards the facts, which make the sequel of his story. And one would have imagined that there could have been nothing more easy than to cause a parish priest who so conducted himself to be punished in the most condign manner. But such was not the case.

In the year 1629 the principal persons of those who had been offended by Grandier,—notably Trinquant, Mignon, Barot, and Menuan, the "Avocat du Roi," who was also a near relation of the others,—had a meeting, "at which it was resolved to cause his destruction." And a complaint was preferred against him before the Bishop of Poitiers. It is remarkable, however, that even after all the just grounds of complaint these persons had against the parish priest, they did not come forward openly in their own persons to prosecute the suit against him, but employed for this purpose "two wretches," says Aubin, "belonging to the very dregs of the populace." It would seem that, notwithstanding the reality of the misdeeds charged against Grandier, the accusations brought against him before the Bishop broke down entirely. For the real persons who had been outraged by Grandier were unwilling to testify publicly to their own dishonour. The general accusations put forward could not be sustained; and no proof was forthcoming against him. But, as if all the other imprudences of which he had been guilty were not enough, he had taken it upon himself to grant certain dispensations, in the matter of a marriage, which in fact it appertained

only to the Bishop to grant. And here was a fact that not only was susceptible of easy proof, but which the Bishop at once perceived to be characterised by extreme enormity. The result was that on the 3rd of January, 1630, Grandier was sentenced by his Bishop to fast on bread and water every Friday for three months, and to be suspended à divinis in the diocese of Poitiers for five years, and in the town of Loudon for ever. Both parties appealed against this sentence,—the accusers to the Parliament of Paris, Grandier to the Archbishop of Bordeaux. In both these courts Grandier was triumphant. The sentence of the lay tribunal was first given. The Lieutenant Criminel de Poitiers, who had been commissioned by the Parliament to investigate the matter, found that the witnesses contradicted each other, and that sundry of them avowed that they had been tampered with by Grandier's enemies. And shortly afterwards the Archbishop pronounced his sentence in the same sense, absolving Grandier from all the accusations cast on him. Thereupon he returned to Loudon, "bearing a laurel branch in his hand," triumphant over all his enemies, and more insolent than ever.

Thus far, then, the really abominable conduct of this parish priest had been unavailing to draw down any punishment upon him, or even to obtain his removal from his cure. The Archbishop, indeed, had privately advised him to change his benefices, and leave a town where it was clear that his presence could in no way be useful. But Grandier was of too proud a spirit to listen to any such counsel. He wished to enjoy his triumph over his enemies; and to let all his world see that not even an "Avocat du Roi" and "Procureur du Roi" leagued together had power to put him down. But now begins the second act of this strange tragedy.

One of the three communities of nuns which have been mentioned as existing at Loudon, was a convent of Ursulines. The members of it belonged almost entirely to the upper classes of society; but they were poor, and to improve their finances they took "pensionnaires" to educate. Of course every nunnery has its "Director," a priest chosen by the community, who is their confessor and close friend, and who has privileged access to the house at all times. Now about the time our story has reached, the director of the Ursulines died; and Grandier and his brother canon and enemy Mignon were both desirous of obtaining the position. The nuns gave the preference to Mignon.

Mignon, immediately on entering on his new duties, found that there was work cut out for him in the convent. The elder sisters of the community complained to him that their house was haunted, and that he must exorcise the ghosts. The younger members of the family quite as readily,—which seems strange, and serves to illustrate the nature of the connection between a community of nuns and their director,—confided to him that they were the authors of all the

strange sights and sounds which had frightened their elders; and that their sole object had been to amuse themselves by alarming and harassing both the old nuns and the little "pensionnaires." One of the latter, a girl between sixteen and seventeen, was a confederate of the young nuns; and used in after life often to recount, says Aubin, all these escapades and espiègleries of her younger days;—how she it was who used noiselessly to draw the bolt, which had overnight been carefully drawn in the presence of all and which separated the younger nuns from the boarders, and admit the frolicsome ghosts who dragged the clothes from the beds of the frightened children, and played all sorts of mischievous pranks more or less consonant with their adopted characters. The reverend Jean Mignon knew the nature of his new place too well to think of putting an end to the disturbances by betraying the confidences thus made to him. On the contrary, he readily entered into the fun of the thing, and encouraged the younger nuns to continue their diableries, scenting the possibility of turning the obsession of the Ursuline convent to some account, even if it should serve to no better purpose than obtaining for himself the credit for sanctity to be gained by putting an end to these inroads of the evil one.

For some time he seems to have been content with instructing the younger nuns to play their part more skilfully and to direct their attention to frightening their seniors rather than to playing tricks on the children. At the same time he laboured to lead the minds of the older women to believe that the convent really was infested by evil spirits. But it would seem that by degrees the mask was allowed to fall, and that several, at least, of the nuns, and among them the Superior, were brought to take a conscious part in the deceptions that were being practised. In some measure their own interests drove them to fall in with his wishes. For among other tricks some of the young nuns had appeared in the recognised costume of ghosts on the roof of the convent, and had there been seen by persons of the town. Remark had been occasioned; the matter began to be whispered about among the inhabitants; and, Mignon skilfully aiding the rumours, it soon became the public talk that the Ursuline convent was haunted. That this should be said in a general way, their director represented to them, would be the ruin of the convent. Who would send their children to a house labouring under such a stigma? But if, on the other hand, the thing were treated properly,—if it were avowed that certain of the nuns were possessed, and if they were duly exorcised, and the devils duly got rid off, the matter would turn to the great glory of God, to the confusion and conversion of heretics,—of whom there were many at Loudon,—and, above all, to the honour and profit of the convent. It would become celebrated for so great a manifestation of the power of God; it would be considered a place marked by special sanctity; and alms, and offerings,

and gifts would flow in in abundance. And what if a little decoit were practised? None but the enemies of God and of his holy religion would be deceived, whom it was a merit and for God's glory to deceive. A good deal of instruction and practice, however, were necessary before the projected comedy was ready to be produced, and it was the autumn of 1632 before Mignon thought fit to invite a brother priest,—one Barré, the Curé of St. Jacques at Chinon,—to be present at the exorcisms. These two priests remained with the Ursulines for ten or twelve days exorcising, or rather probably exercising, their pupils; and then on the 11th of October, 1632, they waited on the "Bailli de Loudunois," the principal magistrate of the district, and on the Lieutenant Civil, and informing them that very extraordinary things were happening at the convent of the Ursulines, begged them, in their official quality as magistrates, to visit the convent, that they might authorise the exorcisms, if they should be convinced of their necessity.

From that time till nearly the end of the year a series of scenes were enacted, which, though totally devoid of any physiological interest, are curious as illustrations of the tone of social manners and morality of the period. All that passed in the convent during these months is related with the most circumstantial detail in the work of M. Aubin. But a much more compressed account of the matter will suffice the readers of these pages.

Of the few thoroughly honest men concerned in the matter, the "Bailli" seems to have been one. He and the Lieutenant Civil, who, for aught that appears to the contrary, may have been also anxious that right should be done in the matter, betook themselves, on the invitation of the two priests, to the Ursuline convent on Monday, the 11th of October, 1632. They were there met by Mignon and Barré, who told them that the nuns generally had for the last fifteen days been grievously tormented by spectres, and that for the last week the Mother Superior and another nun had been unmistakeably possessed by devils; that they, Mignon and Barré, assisted by certain Carmelite monks, had succeeded in driving out the devils by their exorcisms; but that in the night from Saturday to Sunday, the 10th, the same two women had been anew entered and tormented by the same evil spirits; that it had been a very difficult task to compel the devils to tell their names, but that, at last, he that was in the body of the Mother Superior had avowed that his name was Astaroth, and he that had possession of the other nun had declared his name to be Sabulon. They confessed, moreover, that they, the devils, had entered into the nuns by virtue of "a pact," the symbol of which was a bunch of roses.

The magistrates had just had time to listen to these statements, when it was announced by a member of the community that the Superior and the other nun were seized with the convulsions, which denoted

the active presence of the devils. They went up-stairs, and found the patients in bed in a large room, containing five other beds besides the two occupied by the two possessed women. There were several Carmelite monks and some other persons around them. The reverend Jean Mignon forthwith began to show off his abilities as an exorciser, and to trot out his patient.

It is to be observed that the Roman Catholic ritual recognises three signs of a true case of possession;—1st, the power of prophesying, or declaring that which it is supposed to be impossible that the possessed person should know by natural means; 2nd, the power of understanding and speaking languages, of which the possessed person has in his or her normal condition no knowledge; and 3rdly, the exertion of muscular strength to a degree which the patient, in his natural state, would be incapable of putting forth.

The last of these tests was considered to be satisfactorily responded to by the violent contortions and struggles of the women. It was difficult to hold them. We are constantly told in similar cases that “three strong men,”—or so forth,—could not hold the patient. But it is to be remembered that the three strong men do not put out their strength on such an occasion,—that they are in a state of nervous excitement,—that they are afraid of hurting the sufferer,—and that it is a difficult thing for an unskilled person to use his strength for such a purpose without doing injury to the person held.

As to the first test, the exorcisers do not seem to have made any attempt to resort to it, till on one occasion they were compelled to do so by the “Bailli,” much against their will, and with a result which ought to have put an end at once to their pretensions.

The second of the tests prescribed by the ritual is that on which reliance was placed. It seems to have been assumed that all the communications between the exorcisers and the demons should be conducted in Latin. And the Mother Superior, when in her natural state, took a solemn oath that she had no knowledge of that tongue. There is strong ground for believing that, for the glory of God, and led on by the necessity of the position, the Superior swore falsely. For it was given in evidence by certain of the nuns that the Mother Superior was in the habit of explaining to them the Latin of the creed, and the “paternoster.” This, perhaps, did not prove any profound knowledge of the language. But neither did the answers made in Latin to the exorcists give indication of such; for the devil Astaroth talked the most astoundingly bad grammar by the mouth of the Superior.

Here is the first dialogue which took place between the exorcist and the Mother Superior in the presence of the magistrates, by way of a specimen. They were all very similar:—

Exorcist. “Wherefore hast thou entered into the body of this virgin?”—*The Devil.* “By reason of animosity.”

Exorcist. "By virtue of what pact?"—*The Devil.* "By flowers."

Exorcist. "What flowers?"—*The Devil.* "Roses."

Exorcist. "Who sent them?"—*The Devil.* "Urban."

Exorcist. "Tell us his surname."—*The Devil.* "Grandier."

Exorcist. "What is his profession?"—*The Devil.* "A priest."

Exorcist. "Who brought the flowers?"—*The Devil.* "A diabolic person."

The Lieutenant Civile observed to Mignon, when the exorcism was over, that he ought to have interrogated the devil respecting that answer about "animosity." But the priest replied that "it was not permitted him to ask curious questions." And to all the suggestions made in the course of the subsequent colloquies with the devils that such were questions as common sense would dictate for the discovery of collusion between the exorciser and his patient, it was invariably replied that it was not permissible to ask questions "savouring of mere curiosity."

A great many similar farces, under the name of exorcisms, were subsequently performed before the Bailli and the Lieutenant Civil and other magistrates. Almost all of them, except those two,—at all events the Procureur du Roi, the Lieutenant Criminel, and the Avocat du Roi,—were among the bitter enemies of Grandier. It seems to be a very sweeping denunciation of the French society of that day to suppose that three high-placed magistrates, besides many priests, were banded together to hunt a man to death, by pretending to believe such abominable trash as the above; but the facts that all those who had no special hatred against Grandier utterly disbelieved the absurdities; that those who professed to believe them were all his declared enemies; and the efforts that the latter made to prevent anything like a fair examination from taking place, make it impossible to doubt that such was the case. Every time the Mother Superior was exorcised anew in the presence of these magistrates, she repeated that Urban Grandier was the author of her possession by devils. Of course these assertions were not long in reaching the ears of Grandier himself. At first he was disposed to treat the matter with utter contempt. But the proportions which the affair quickly assumed made this impossible. And Grandier represented to the Bailli in a judicially-drawn document that such statements had been made, that the calumny was calculated to be seriously prejudicial to him, and that he therefore begged in the interest of justice that Mignon, his declared enemy, and Mignon's friends, should no longer be permitted to exorcise the women; that these women should be sequestered in some dwelling over which the magistrates could exercise control; that exorcisers not open to suspicion should be appointed to attend them under the personal surveillance of the magistrates; and that they should also be visited by some competent physician to be

appointed by the magistrates. And to these demands the Bailli at once assented, issuing his precept to that effect.

But the Bailli soon found that Mother Church had fortresses to retreat into, which it was beyond his power to force. To his order to Mignon and Barré not to proceed to any more exorcisms, it was replied that they were empowered to do so by the Bishop; and as to the project of moving the nuns from their dwelling, it was replied that this would involve a breach of their vows, and was impossible.

Thus the exorcisms were continued, and the magistrates contented themselves with being present at them. But the scenes and utterances which took place on these occasions were so constantly a repetition of the same things that it is not worth while to reproduce them. Suffice it to say that the comedy was played in the most bungling and blundering fashion; that the fraud was too palpable to deceive any one for an instant, and that they who chose to pretend that they were deceived were impostors. The devils, speaking by the mouths of the nuns, constantly contradicted themselves; and nothing but the most barefaced effrontery could have ventured on the excuses and subterfuges to which the priests were obliged every now and then to resort.

Upon one occasion the Bailli had brought with him a Scotchman of the name of Strahan, who was the principal of a Huguenot college at London. The Mother Superior having in her answer to the exorcist said something about water, Strahan desired that the devil should be asked what that was in Scotch. It was admitted that this would be a proof of the most conclusive kind, as it could not be imagined that the Huguenot foreigner was in league with the priests; and as the ritual recognises the knowledge of strange tongues as a mark of possession, the exorciser was forced to say that he would put the question "if God permitted it." But to reiterated questions on the point the only answer returned was "*nimia curiositas*." On which the exorcist remarked that in truth the question did seem to savour of "too great curiosity." But on being pressed again, the devil replied by the mouth of the Mother Superior, "*Deus non volo*." There was a general outcry at this bad grammar. And the devil was solemnly charged in the name of God to speak grammatically. But the same words, "*Deus non volo*," were the only answer that could be got to the demand for the Scotch for water. The exorcist maintained that the question was not a fitting one. The Lieutenant Civil replied that the question was a reasonable one; "for," added he, "you may learn from the ritual that you have in your hand, that the power to speak strange and unknown tongues is a true test of possession."

"The devil knows that language well enough," replied the exorcist, "but he does not choose to speak it. But if you would like that he should tell you your sins, I will order him to do so immediately." How strangely vividly athwart all the intervening mists of time this

rejoinder of the priest paints to us the low, stupid, vulgar, ribald nature of the man! "I should have no objection," replied the Lieutenant; and the priest turned to the Mother Superior as if to question her on this subject. But, on the Bailli interfering with a remark as to the indecency of such a proceeding, he desisted.

The bystanders, however, were obstinate in their desire to hear the devil speak some strange tongue; and Hebrew was proposed, "as being a dead language, the most ancient of all languages, and one which the devil must be supposed to know better than any other." And the exorcist accordingly was compelled to ask the unhappy Mother Superior to name the Hebrew word for water. Of course, notwithstanding the devil's necessary acquaintance with Hebrew, she could not do so. No reply was returned. But those who were standing close around the bed heard the unhappy woman, thus tormented and driven to bay, mutter between her teeth, "*Ah, je renie!*"—"Ah, I give it up,"—which was intelligible enough. There was, however, a Carmelite monk present, who declared that the sounds which she had uttered were in fact Hebrew words, signifying, "I have poured out water."

Upon another occasion the Bailli, after much difficulty and many evasions, insisted that the devil who possessed the Mother Superior should be asked where Grandier was at that moment. The exorcist could not refuse to put this question, as it was quite in accordance with the directions of the ritual for the investigation of one of the recognised marks of possession,—that of "prophecy." The question was put, therefore,—an answer given,—and trusty persons were immediately sent to verify the fact. Grandier was found far from the place designated by the devil, in a house to which the Bailli had told him to go, with a view to asking the question. After that it was determined to exclude the Bailli from the nunnery at the time of the exorcisms, on the score of "impiety," and as being a person who sought "to deny the wonders of God," to the notable diminution of the glory of his holy name.

The tidings of the wonderful things that were taking place in the convent of the Ursulines at Loudon had by this time spread so far that the Queen sent her almoner to Loudon to bring her a true account of the matter, and Mignon and Barré judged that it was desirable to strengthen their hands. They applied, therefore, to the Bishop of Poitiers to name a commission for the more effectual exorcising of the possessed nuns, and succeeded in suggesting to him, as the members of this commission, two priests from neighbouring parishes, who were blood-relations of some of the parties to the plot. And no doubt the obsession of the nuns would have become more terrible than ever under the care of these new exorcists, had it not been that just then it became known that the Archbishop

of Bordeaux was expected shortly to arrive at his Abbey of St. Jouin, in the neighbourhood of London.

The near approach of this dignitary, who seems to have been a man very different from the Bishop of Poitiers, had at once a wonderful effect in driving away the evil spirits. They could not exist within a few leagues of an archbishop,—especially an archbishop who no sooner came into their neighbourhood than he sent, not his chaplain, but his physician, to inquire into the matter. Mignon took the physician to the convent, and showed him the late patients; but told him that at last they had been miraculously delivered from the spirits who had tormented them. The medical inquirer could only testify that most assuredly none of the nuns appeared to him at that time to have anything the matter with them.

Grandier also, about the same time, made complaint to the Archbishop of the calumny that had been spread against him, and obtained from him an order that no exorcism should be performed on any of the nuns, save, in case of need, by Barré, accompanied by two priests named by him the Archbishop,—to wit, Father l'Escaye, a Jesuit of Poitiers, and Father Gan, of the Oratory, residing at Tours. This precept of the Archbishop ordained that the nun said to be possessed should be sequestered in a house apart,—that no person should have access to her, save one female attendant, the three exorcists,—not separately from each other,—the medical men to be called in, and two magistrates. The possessed woman should then be visited by the most skilful physicians to be found. They were to make their report, after watching her for some days. After this, if the symptoms should continue, the priests named in the commission were to strive, by menaces, and discipline if needed, to discover the truth. Then, if need were, and then only, might exorcism be used. The signs required are stated to be, that the possessed person should correctly tell to the three exorcists a thought on which they had agreed; and that she should state several things that, at the instant of speaking, were passing at a distance; that she should discourse in various different tongues, sentences of eight or ten words perfectly, correctly, and grammatically; and that, being placed upon a mattress, with her hands and feet tied, she should be raised, while no person should be near her, for a considerable time, so as not to touch the earth at all. After all this shall have happened, and not before, might resort be made to exorcism.

Of course the result of this ordinance was, that there was no need of putting any of its prescriptions into force; for the possessed nuns remained perfectly free from their spiritual tormentors for a long time following the departure of the Archbishop. But the enemies of Grandier were not beaten yet. The Archbishop was a great man certainly; but there was a greater than he whom it might not be impossible to get on their side.

There was living at or near Loudon at that time a certain René Mémén, Seigneur de Silli, who occupied the position of "Mayor" of the town. He was a rich and very influential man at Loudon. But, what was more to the purpose than all else, he was an old and valued friend of the Cardinal Richelieu! When the all-powerful Cardinal had been a simple curé in that part of the country, and Silli was by far the greater man of the two, there had been friendship and good offices on the part of the wealthy country gentleman towards the poor priest. And what was likely to have made a yet stronger impression on the minister's mind, Silli had shown himself as much attached to the Cardinal as ever during the period of his disgrace. And Richelieu had shown, with regard to him, that he could remember an old friendship no less than he was notorious for never forgetting an old enmity. Now this man René Mémén was the intimate friend of most of the sworn enemies of Grandier, and had from the first taken part with the believers in and favourers of the possession of the Ursuline nuns by devils.

Considering the position in which the affair stood;—the gross absurdity of the allegations, even as looked at by the light available to the inhabitants of a French provincial town in the seventeenth century; the blundering and clumsy acting of the performers in the farce; the result of the inquiry instituted by so great and high-placed an authority as the Archbishop of Bordeaux; and, lastly, the fact that all symptoms of activity on the part of the devils had at once ceased from the time that the Archbishop took the matter in hand;—considering all these things, one would say that a somewhat difficult enterprise lay before those who still persevered in the attempt to effect the destruction of a man by such a stratagem. It may possibly be thought that the ruin of Grandier might have been accomplished by means which would not have sufficed to compass that of another, by reason of the very grave faults which might justly have been urged against him. But it is very remarkable, that throughout the whole of the proceedings arising out of the pretended possession of the Ursuline nuns, nothing whatever is heard of the previous immoralities of the parish priest.

Just at the time when all the symptoms of possession had ceased in consequence of the visit of the Archbishop, when the little town was recovering from the agitation into which it had been thrown, and everything, save the idea of getting at the Cardinal by the means of his old friend Mémén de Silli, seemed to indicate that the game was up, and that the conspirators must relinquish their hope of ruining the object of their hatred, circumstances arose which played remarkably into their hands. Louis XIII.,—that is, Richelieu,—had determined to raze all the old feudal castles in the interior provinces of France. One of these existed at Loudon, and a man named Lanbardemont was sent as commissary to superintend the destruction of

it. Now it so chanced that this Lanbardemont, besides being a creature of Richelieu, was also a relation of the Mother Superior of the Ursulines. He came to Loudon for the execution of the commission which had been entrusted to him, and, as was very natural, one of the first persons in the country with whom he became intimate was that other close friend of his patron, M^{em}in de Silli. At the house of Silli he met all the others of the party, who accused Grandier of having occasioned the scandal which had arisen in connection with the name of his relative, the Superior of the Ursulines, and at once became one of the most determined among them.

What was needed was some means of enlisting the passions of Richelieu in the result the conspirators were minded to bring about. And this they were fortunate enough to discover. There was at that time a woman in the service of the Queen named Hammon, who was a native of Loudon, and who had passed the greater part of her life there. She was not by birth a woman of rank, but having entered the service of the Queen, she had had the good fortune to please her Majesty and had been promoted to a place near her person. This woman had been well-known to Grandier during her residence at Loudon. Now it had so happened that a bitter satire on the Cardinal,—a satire which had wounded Richelieu to the quick,—had been published during the period of his disgrace under the name of this woman Hammon. It had happened also that when, many years ago, Richelieu had been Prior of Cussai in the Loudunois, there had been some little misunderstanding between him and Grandier respecting a matter of ecclesiastical precedence.

On careful consideration of all these circumstances it struck the conclave of Grandier's enemies, that it might be very easy to lead the Cardinal to believe that his old neighbour and rival Church dignity was the real author of the libel published under the name of the woman Hammon. Perhaps an interchange of letters had really existed between Hammon and Grandier. If not, it was easy to assert that such had existed. And it was suggested that all such matter in the satire as was less likely to have proceeded from a country priest than from a denizen of the Court, had been supplied to Grandier in this manner. Lanbardemont at once pronounced the scheme to be an admirable one, and undertook, on returning to Paris, to put it in execution. Meantime, the wonders at the Ursuline convent began again more actively than ever. People, remembering under what circumstances they had ceased, were much astonished at the audacity of the devils. But it was soon understood that they had recommenced their attacks under patronage which removed all surprise.

Lanbardemont returned to Paris, and performed so well the part he had undertaken that, on the 6th of December, 1633, he himself returned to Loudon, as commissary for the investigation of all that had passed and was passing in the convent of the Ursulines, armed

with most extensive and arbitrary powers. His return was immediately signalled by two notable changes in the situation. Grandier was, by virtue of an order bearing the king's signature, shut up in prison; and the cases of "possession" not only were exceedingly multiplied within the walls of the Ursuline convent, but began to spread rapidly among the lay population of the town. It is not recorded, however, that any save women were attacked; and those were all of them, as people remarked, parishioners of Mignon, and frequenters of his confessional.

Grandier was sent to prison in the castle of Angers; and all his books and papers were seized and subjected to the most careful examination. Nothing was found that could in any way help the case of his accusers, save a treatise against celibacy, written by him; the object of which, there is some reason to suspect, was to quiet the conscience of some woman with whom his relations had been culpable. At the end of the MS. were written these two verses:—

"Si ton gentil esprit prend bien cette science,
Tu mettras en repos ta bonne conscience."

The lines were not produced at his trial; but it was stated that he had added at the close of his writing lines too vile and immodest to be published.

These violent proceedings,—the committing a man to prison unexamined, and even unaccused in any judicial way, were not allowed to pass without energetic resistance. Grandier's aged mother, and his brother, appealed, and served requisition upon requisition upon Lanbardemont. But, as might be expected, it was useless to kick against the pricks. Lanbardemont, for all answer to every application, simply pointed to the words of his commission, in which it was indisputably written, that he was to proceed in this matter notwithstanding all appeals, oppositions, or requisitions to the contrary;—that is to say, despite all law, and every form of justice. In fact, it would have been simpler, shorter, and no whit less monstrously an exercise of pure despotic power, to have seized the victim, and at once proceeded to the intended end.

But the farce of reiterated cases of "possession" was proceeded with. And the long details of the kickings and plungings and foamings at the mouth of a great number of unhappy, misguided women,—some, perhaps, only partially conscious of imposture,—are recorded at length. The proceedings of the exorcists,—not, as may be imagined, the two discreet and trustworthy priests whom the Archbishop of Bordeaux had named for the purpose,—but the members chiefly of the Carmelite convent at Loudon, who from the beginning had strongly taken part against Grandier, are related with minute particularity with all the questions they put to the devils, and all the replies they obtained from them. The amount of stupidity,

vileness, practical atheism, and low and degraded estimate and conception of all things, human and divine, which the perusal of these sad details press upon the mind is truly humiliating. There is no good end to be served in reproducing them,—not even the gratification of curiosity; for it is the same thing over and over again. The amount of blasphemy and gross indecency uttered is such that the reprinting of it would be offensive. Of course all the possessed women declared that Grandier was the magician who had caused the devils to enter into them. But, despite the uniformity of this testimony, it is difficult to understand why the predetermined end was not at once proceeded to, instead of the multiplied repetition of a series of scenes, every one of which added to the irresistible mass of evidence tending to show that the whole thing was an ill-got-up imposture.

It seems, indeed, that the grossness of the imposture was beginning to produce an effect even on the besotted ignorance of the inhabitants of the little provincial town; for it was found necessary to issue an edict which one morning was found posted on all the walls of the town, to the effect that any one who should dare to speak in any way against the nuns of St. Ursula should suffer the severest penalties of defamation. Now it was, of course, clearly impossible to doubt the reality of Grandier's crime without speaking ill of the Ursuline nuns.

In the meantime, however, the friends of Grandier had lodged an appeal against the gross illegalities of which he had been the victim before the parliament of Paris. Thereupon, in the February of 1634, Lanbardemont returned to Paris, whence, in less than two months, he came back armed with an "arrêt" signed by the king, to the effect that he,—Lanbardemont,—was authorised and ordered to proceed with the hearing and judging of the case of Urban Grandier, despite all opposition or appeals to any court or jurisdiction whatever, the king having forbidden the parliament and all other judges to meddle in the matter in any way. The "arrêt" also decreed a fine of five hundred livres to be levied on any person who should make any attempt to appeal, or have recourse to any judge or tribunal in the matter.

Lanbardemont, therefore, was invested with absolutely unlimited and despotic power over the unfortunate man, and might just as well have sent him to his death at once. But the victim of Richelieu's vengeance was not to be allowed to escape so easily. He was repeatedly subjected to the torture under the pretext of endeavouring to obtain a confession of his crime. But the miserable victim had sufficient constancy to maintain his innocence of all sorcery or impiety to the last.

It is needless to sicken the reader with the details of the horrible contrivances by which his body and limbs were made to suffer all

the agony that could be inflicted without putting an end to his suffering. But it is worth mentioning that the Carmelite fathers, under the pretence that the cords and wedges and other instruments of torture might be bewitched by the devil in the prisoner's behalf, were themselves present in the torture-chamber, and assisted, with their own hands, in inflicting the torments. It is fair, however, to add that Grandier had, in his palmy days, preached against the special holiness of a certain altar in their convent!

At last, on Friday the 18th of August, 1634, the mangled body of the Cardinal's enemy was brought out to suffer the sentence that had been passed on him,—that he should be burned alive!

This doom was carried out with literal accuracy. The executioner, —or the officer who was to superintend the execution,—had promised the miserable man two things;—the first, that a minute or two should be allowed him that he might make to the assembled multitude a last declaration of his innocence of the imaginary crime for which he suffered; the second, that a cord should be at hand with which he should be strangled at the moment of setting fire to the faggots. But the Carmelite monks, crowding close around the stake, threw such quantities of holy water into his face when he attempted to speak, that the first promise was made of no effect. And when the executioner essayed to perform the second, it was found that the same hands had so knotted the cord as to incapacitate it from serving the purpose for which it was intended!

And so Urban Grandier was burned alive! and has not been much heard of since.

Of the other man, who gratified his hatred and vengeance by torturing and burning him, the world has not yet ceased to talk;—nor has the nation which gave him the power to feast on such vengeance yet ceased to pay the penalty for having done so.

JEAN BAPTISTE COLBERT.

THE reign of Louis XIV., celebrated alike for the splendour of its early, and for the gloom of its later years, will always form a favourite chapter in French history; but whilst the brilliance of the French court, and the warlike achievements of French soldiers, or of their enemies, have been described in glowing terms by many an enthusiastic writer; whilst the poets, who shed such grace over their own age, still live in their works as the representatives of the literary genius of their nation, scanty respect has been paid to the memory of the statesmen who, by the development which they gave to the resources of the country,—by the solidity which they gave to its power,—were as much the real authors of its greatness as the King, by his overreaching ambition, was of its subsequent weakness. Of these men, first in point of time as well as of intellect, was he whose name stands at the head of this page.

Jean Baptiste Colbert, the son of parents who, whatever may have been their ancestry, certainly occupied a very humble position, was born at Reims on the 29th of August, 1619. Of his early life we know but little, but it seems clear that about the age of twenty-four he was introduced into the service of Le Tellier, one of the Secretaries of State, and, after being eight years in his office, was transferred to the service of Mazarin. In it he continued in a responsible position, apparently as private secretary and master of the household, until the death of the Cardinal in 1661, when circumstances brought him prominently forward, and his career assumes the historical importance due to that of a great statesman.

The quarrel which had long been smouldering between Mazarin and Fouquet, and their respective subordinates, came to a crisis on the death of the former. Mazarin was both constitutionally and by policy averse to extreme measures; Colbert held very opposite views; Fouquet had throughout treated him with especial insolence and disdain; and the private secretary was not a man to be insulted with impunity. He laid before the King such a clear account of the malpractices of the Superintendent of Finance, that his disgrace followed within a few days. We can but allude here to the celebrated process against Fouquet,—a process which gratified Colbert's revenge, at the same time that he reaped from it the most solid advantage. It was, in fact, the foundation-stone of his fortune. Resolved to keep the supreme direction of affairs in his own hands, and struck with the

ability which Colbert had displayed in preparing the charges against Fouquet, the young king, Louis XIV., then only twenty-two, appointed him to the vacant office, as Controller of Finance. The man's tact, acquired in long training in subordinate positions, and his aptitude for business, very shortly won him the entire favour of the King, and during the ten years which followed his first appointment, although nominally holding only particular offices, he was, in reality, all but absolute throughout the kingdom.

The time, however, was one of extreme difficulty, and it was only by slow degrees that he was able to enter on any great policy. His work at the beginning was necessarily for the most part work of reform, and his attention was fully occupied with the struggle against the internal confusion of the country, which had been brought to the verge of bankruptcy by the unprincipled and licentious administration of his predecessor, whilst the population was being decimated by a famine of almost unexampled severity, caused in a great measure by the failure of the harvest of 1661, but fearfully aggravated by a clause in the corn laws passed the same year, which distinctly forbade the formation of any company for the sale of grain, or the accumulation of grain in any magazines. There was thus no store in the country to meet the emergency. Out of Josephus we know of nothing so terrible as the description of the sufferings of the French peasantry during that spring of 1662. To say that they died in crowds conveys no idea of their sufferings. They were found dead in the fields, their mouths full of the grass with which they had vainly tried to stay the cravings of hunger. They were found dead in the church porches, having half devoured their own hands and arms; dead in the houses, destitute of all furniture and clothes; dead in the gutters, where they had been grovelling for carrion and garbage; whilst many that lived were known to have sustained life on food of a nature so loathsome, that at the very thought of it the blood runs cold with horror.

Immediate and energetic measures on the part of the government were necessary to relieve this fearful destitution. Corn was bought up in foreign countries, and from the stores thus acquired, and from Paris, sufficient was thrown into the provinces to bring the price down to a moderate level; whilst, at the same time, large grants of money were made, and reiterated appeals to private charity called forth supplies which served to relieve the most pressing wants.

But the disorder which existed amongst the finances of the country, though not so lethal as the famine, was almost as important a consideration. It is difficult to conceive anything worse than the state into which the revenue had fallen. This was not only from the neglect of crown property, but from the alienation of some of the principal taxes; the misappropriation of others; the wasteful expenditure of past years; the fraud, speculation, and gross misconduct of

the collectors, not in isolated cases, but all over the country. The people were ground down by a heavy, almost intolerable taxation, and the public chest contained little or no money. To remedy this,—to restore order where there seemed nothing but impending ruin,—work compared to which the cleansing of the Augean stable seems the amusement of a summer afternoon,—was the task that Colbert was called upon to perform.

The state of the government securities was the first point that demanded his attention. The direct taxes of Paris were almost swallowed up by charges secured on irregular or illegal bonds. These were cancelled, notwithstanding the excitement which such a step caused amongst the many who had bought the stock in good faith. Other loans which had been legally secured at a high rate of interest, were paid off with money borrowed on more equitable terms, thus effecting an annual saving of eight millions of francs. Others, again, were bought in, the holders being obliged to sell at the low price for which they had purchased. Very large sums were further raised by the Chamber of Justice, which compelled the financial agents of the former administration to disgorge a considerable portion of their ill-gotten wealth. This court, appointed by the King specially to examine into and adjudicate on the numerous charges brought against these men, whilst sentencing many to corporal punishment or death, imposed on most of them fines which ran in some individual instances as high as six millions, and amounted in the aggregate to upwards of 110 millions of francs. When such sums could be recovered, after several years of the unbounded extravagance and splendour which rendered the name of financier almost proverbial, we can form some estimate of the enormity of the frauds which had been eating into the life of the country.

The same cankerworm existed in every department of the public service. Careless and corrupt administration, winking at or directly allowing rights illegally usurped, had reduced the revenue derived from the royal forests to 150,000 francs. Ten years later it averaged upwards of a million. The pernicious practice of selling at a high price almost every office under government had in itself given rise to incalculable evil; and as the salaries had been irregularly or seldom paid, those purchasers who had the power naturally enough indemnified themselves for the loss. Patents of nobility, which carried with them exemptions from many government claims, had been lavishly granted during past years, and the system of raising supplies by the sale of such patents was openly recognised. It had thus come to pass that the large body of the rich, on whom the payment of taxes would have fallen but lightly, paid nothing; and that the money for the necessities of the government had to be wrung out of the earnings of the poor. Against this injustice a decisive blow was struck by the edict of 1665, which revoked all letters of nobility

granted since 1634. At the same time many were convicted of having seized on the privileges without any authority. These were both punished and made liable to pay in the future; so that the burden of the people was considerably relieved. The clamour against Colbert was, however, very loud. Those who were exposed, fined, and taxed, were men of wealth and position, and their indignation was very great. This sought a vent, not in a defence of their own inexcusable conduct, of which they avoided all mention, but in a cry that Colbert was undermining the constitution of the country, lowering the royal prerogative, and putting the gentlemen on the same footing as the peasants. Colbert, however, was too firmly seated in office to be influenced or disturbed by the complaints of these would-be aristocrats, and the work of reform was carried on with energetic determination and unsparing severity. Highway robbery was put down, rioters punished, public peace insisted on; internal traffic was encouraged; local dues, so far as feelings of provincial pride permitted, were equalised; and under the rule of a government at once able and strong, the country began quickly to emerge from the abyss of barbarism, into which the last hundred years of anarchy, sedition, or rebellion, persecution, oppression, and civil war had thrown it.

Integrity, economy, and order were, however, but tributaries to the principal stream by which wealth was to be poured into the country. Colbert was the son of a shopkeeper, educated in early youth with a view to a mercantile life; and the bias which his mind thus received affected his whole policy, and led him to consider that the true prosperity of the nation was to be sought in manufactures and commerce. On this principle he determined that the capabilities of the kingdom should be developed, and he carried the determination through with an ardour that neither failure could chill, nor the fear of responsibility check. The labour which he devoted to each separate branch of industry was excessive. As soon as a trade was introduced, or resolved on, it received his fostering care, nor did he withdraw his attention as long as it showed a spark of vitality. It was thus that France became celebrated for her manufactures of lace, ribbon, and silk; but the means by which he established and nurtured them were of a most absolute, often of an illegal nature. When he learned that the ribbon-makers of Chevreuse were in the habit of wasting their time in dissipation, he published an order forbidding the publichouse-keepers of the town to sell them anything either to eat or drink during working hours. When he heard of a workman at Lyons who had found out some improvement in cloth-printing, and was on the point of taking it to Florence, he had him imprisoned, in order to prevent his leaving the country; and many similar instances might be given; for one of the distinguishing features in Colbert's character was a fixedness of purpose that,—when he had once made up his mind as to what ought

to be done.—went straight at the end proposed with a determination to bear down all obstacles. And his ideas were for the most part conformable to the period in which he lived; more enlarged and clearer than those of ordinary men, but still subject to the influences of the age, which centuries of tyranny and misrule had prevented from receiving the more persuasive maxims of civilisation. Violent and extreme, often illegal, punishments thus seemed to him the best, as they were the quickest, means of attaining his end; and the men who were subjected to them, accustomed to the oppression of the great, and to the disorders of rebellion and revolt, saw nothing strange in his arbitrary method of carrying on the government. These influences, acting on his industrial policy, caused him to believe that a large and powerful country like France ought to be almost entirely self-supporting; that its manufactures, its agriculture, its commerce, ought to be sufficient to provide for all the wants of both necessity and luxury; and that strict protection and constant government surveillance were the best means of making them so. It was contrary to the spirit of the age, ignorant alike of the theory and practice of commerce, to suppose that the wealth and prosperity of adjoining nations were really sources from which wealth and prosperity ought to flow towards his own country; and with the whole weight of his influence and power he endeavoured to make France independent of any import trade with the rest of Europe. It was thus that he devised the exorbitant tariff of 1667, which, doubling and in some cases tripling the previously existing duties, amounted to a partial or even total prohibition of both export and import. The manufactures of the country, in their young and undeveloped state, doubtless reaped a very decided advantage from this prohibition. They could not produce enough to feel the clog of the export duties, whilst those on imports gave them a sufficient sale within the country. But agriculture suffered terribly; for as corn could not be exported at all except by permission from government, and as this permission could never be depended on, the farmers simplified their cares by not growing more than would satisfy the demands of their own neighbourhood. Thus the good land only was cultivated, the inferior was neglected; and on any failure, or partial failure, of the harvest, there was an immediate famine; for as each province only sowed what would be enough for its own consumption, even when the dearth was confined to one, the others had no excess out of which to relieve the want. Very great suffering was, therefore, common; a scarcity of bread,—not merely a certain rise in price, but an absolute scarcity,—occurring about once in every three years; and on each occasion of this distress the attempt was made to prevent it in future by making still stricter the laws against the export of grain.

And yet, whilst clogging with exorbitant duties the commerce that was within his reach, he was still most anxious to grasp at that which

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was beyond it. He looked with great bitterness of feeling on the enormous revenues which the Dutch drew from their East and West India trade, from their trade in the Levant and the Baltic, and from their Northern fisheries, whether of whale or herring. He could not help seeing that it was this wide-spread commerce which gave the Dutch an influence and power in Europe wholly disproportionate to the size of their country and the number of their population; nor could he avoid picturing to himself the magnificent future in store for France when her commerce had taken the place of that of Holland. To this end his labours were directed; and as at that period companies, protected and assisted by the government, were believed to offer the best and surest way of developing a new commerce, such companies were formed with special privileges to trade, whether north, south, west, or east. There was the Company of the North, designed to divert the Baltic trade and the fisheries to France; the Company of the Pyrenees, which was to bring timber, pitch, and tar from the mountain-slopes to the sea-ports where they could be made available; there was the African Company to trade in negroes, palm-oil, ivory, and gold-dust; the West Indian Company, to share in the valuable commerce of the Antilles and the Spanish Main;—above all, there was the East India Company, which, it was fondly hoped, would draw to France the produce that had successively enriched Venice, Portugal, and Holland. Three attempts to establish an East India Company had already failed, when, in 1664, Colbert took the matter in hand, resolved to succeed if trouble and expense could enable him to do so. But the previous failures had made the commercial public look coldly on the scheme, and much argument and persuasion were necessary to induce them to come forward with their subscriptions. The mayors of the different towns were invited to give both their money and influence; the government officials were given indirectly to understand that their personal interest might be forwarded by a liberal contribution; the king himself subscribed three millions out of the fifteen with which the company was started, and it was agreed that these three millions should not bear interest for the first ten years, and that any losses the company might sustain should be chargeable on them. The company was further gifted with numerous privileges, exemptions from duties and tolls, and the rights of sovereignty over the countries which it might acquire from the natives, or conquer from the enemy. It was thus fairly started in 1664; but neither the protection nor privileges, nor assistance of the government, could support it against the unfortunate selection of the superior officers, and the apparent incapacity of the French people for colonisation. During the first eleven years of its existence there was an actual loss of six millions and a half; and though it lingered on for upwards of a century, it never enjoyed more than the most transient gleams of prosperity.

The fate of the other companies was still more decisive. The

Company of the West Indies became bankrupt for three and a half millions within ten years; the Company of the North collapsed on the breaking out of the war with Holland in 1672; and that of the Pyrenees ceased to exist about the same time.

The bad success which attended all these companies was far from making Colbert view with equanimity the continued stream of commerce which poured its riches into the lap of Holland. It was this probably that caused him to adhere so firmly to the toll of fifty sous per ton levied on all foreign ships arriving in French ports,—a toll which pressed heavily on foreign merchants, more particularly on the Dutch, and stirred up much ill feeling without producing to the revenue any direct advantage worth speaking of,—for it does not seem in any year to have amounted to half a million of francs. But the toll did undoubtedly at the time give a great stimulus to the native ship-owners; and though the Dutch remonstrated against it, still, as they could only appeal to the faith of ancient treaties, whilst Colbert was supported in his resolve by the manifest advantage which it must bring to French shipping, their remonstrance was unavailing. The toll was continued, rankling in the minds of the Dutch, whose material interests were again still more severely injured by the tariff of 1667. This tariff pressed so heavily on the manufactures of both England and Holland, that war with both countries seemed at one time imminent. It did not, however, suit the purpose of the English king to break with the Crown that paid his pension; and the English people, with no goodwill, were forced to submit to the new duties and the loss which they imposed on them. With the Dutch it was different. Unrestrained by a slavish government, they did not hesitate to express their dissatisfaction in the plainest terms; and illwill in consequence sprung up between the two countries, which Colbert, backed by the army of France, was by no means anxious to allay. War, if war should arise, was as likely a way as any other to lessen the power and drain the resources of Holland. Accordingly, after years of tedious and querulous negotiation, war broke out in 1672; and in a few months Holland, overrun by the French troops, with its strong places in the hands of the enemy, seemed on the brink of destruction. It was then that Colbert, hoping to accomplish his long wished-for purpose, endeavoured to persuade the king to adopt a series of measures which, if acted on, would have annihilated the Dutch trade. His proposals, which amounted to a demand for the cession of all their East and West Indian settlements, and of their right of trade in the Mediterranean, were, however, rejected by the king as too moderate to be offered to a country already completely subjected. The result was,—as is well known,—a continuance of the war, in which the frenzy of despair lent a vigour to the Dutch arms against which numbers availed little. The De Witts were massacred in a fit of popular fury; and the Prince of Orange, raised to the head of affairs,

so ably conducted them in the cabinet at home and in the field abroad, that France lost her advantage almost as quickly as she had gained it. For six years this bitter war continued, and ended at last in the treaty of Nimeguen, by which France,—though gaining from Germany and Spain some increase of her territory,—lost all the commercial advantages to the pursuit of which Colbert had devoted his ministry and his life. The tariff of 1667, the original cause of the war, was given up; the special privileges and excessive duties by which he had sought to establish certain branches of commerce and manufacture were abolished, and it was agreed that reciprocal liberty of trade between the two countries should not be prohibited, limited, or restrained.

In the conduct of this war on shore, Colbert, however, had no part beyond providing the money which it devoured. At sea it was different. He had been actually the head of the naval department since 1669, and virtually so since 1665. It is in this capacity that his career offers the greatest interest to us, as Englishmen; and doubly so when we find that, owing to his energetic measures, France, a few years before entirely destitute of any naval force, was able to send the Count d'Estrées with a fleet of forty sail to witness the battle of Solbay in May, 1672; and the Duke de Vivonne with upwards of fifty ships to conduct the celebrated campaign of Sicily in 1676. It is this sudden rise of the French navy, this extraordinary development of the French maritime power,—which has been, with a pardonable pride, compared to the springing forth of Minerva from the head of Jupiter, armed and ready for the combat,—that must ever be considered as the crowning point of Colbert's fame.

Richelieu had indeed attempted to form a navy which might be not quite unworthy of a great nation; and eighty ships of war with twenty galleys seem to have been actually got together in an efficient state; but the troubles of the Fronde with its accompanying civil wars quickly undid the work of the Great Cardinal, and the neglect of Mazarin completed the destruction. A fleet cannot be kept up without a large and continuous outlay of money, and the disordered state of the finances during Mazarin's ministry did not admit of the requisite funds being supplied. Whilst Mazarin himself was appropriating fifty millions out of the public money; whilst Fouquet and the subordinate financiers were revelling in a display of luxury and wealth which has perhaps never been approached, the sum annually spent on the equipment of the king's ships fell from the five millions, which Richelieu had considered necessary in 1647, to three hundred thousand francs, which was all that Mazarin and his gang of attendant harpies could allow. We cannot then feel surprised that in 1662, Colbert found that the state possessed no more than two or three ships of war in a sea-worthy condition, and that of the twenty galleys left by Richelieu, six only, miserably inefficient, remained; the rest

had rotted on their slips, or sunk in the harbour of Toulon. With the new ministry, a new order of things was installed. Resolved that the state should have a naval force both numerous and efficient, Colbert commenced the work of reformation at once. In 1662 he caused three millions to be allotted for that purpose; in succeeding years this sum was doubled and trebled, and in 1671,—in ten years, that is, from the time of his taking office,—he had raised this part of his budget to thirteen millions. That the government was in a position to afford this large sum was due entirely to the financial and administrative reforms which Colbert had introduced. That it did afford it was as entirely due to the influence of Colbert as head of the navy. Nor under the direction of such a man was it possible for the money to be misapplied; every expense was strictly inquired into; the most severe economy was everywhere enjoined; and however the public treasure might be squandered in lavish profusion, in other departments, which were beyond Colbert's control, there is little doubt that in this, at least, France got very good value for her money.

Large quantities of stores were purchased in Sweden; many ships, ready for sea, were bought from Holland, then a friendly state, and many others were ordered to be built; but Colbert was keenly alive to the necessity of being independent of any foreign government. The Dutch willingly lent him skilled workmen, whom he brought from Holland to teach their trade to the raw hands that he had to employ; and they taught it them well, so that in a few years the French shipbuilders became celebrated both for the rapidity and excellence of their work; and down to the wars of the Revolution, French ships were considered as models of men-of-war.

Quickness in the building of a ship was a point on which Colbert laid great stress. Experience has shown that this was a mistake; that the timbers, as they are fixed in their places, require time to settle, and become firmly knit together; this was probably not known two hundred years ago, or it would be difficult to explain the importance which Colbert,—who had a wonderful theoretical knowledge of even the details and technicalities of the profession,—attached to lessening the time in which a ship could be built and equipped. In this, as will generally be the case with anything to which an earnest attention is paid, the success was almost incredible. Towards the latter part of his administration a ship could be laid down, built, launched, rigged, and got ready for sea in half a day. Wonderful as this statement is, it rests on indisputable evidence. In July, 1679, a forty-gun frigate was actually built at Toulon in seven hours; and about the same date, a galley carried the Marquis de Seignelay and a large official party from Marseilles to the Château d'If, within ten hours and a half from the time that the shipwrights commenced to build her. These of course were very exceptional cases, but they

show what the ideal standard of perfection was,—a standard to which the different controllers and superintendents were constantly urged to approach as near as possible on ordinary occasions. When the head of the department showed himself always energetic and watchful, when he was also at the head of the finances of the kingdom, and could push forward his projects with all the resources that money could buy, we need not wonder at the results obtained. By the official list of January 1st, 1677, the last year of the war with Holland, the state possessed, exclusively of galleys, one hundred and ninety-nine ships of war of all sizes, actually afloat. Of these sixty-eight were first, second, and third-rates, that is, ships of not less than fifty guns, or eight hundred tons burden, and several of them were much larger, as, for instance, the *Soleil Royal* and the *Royal Louis*, each of two thousand four hundred tons burden and one hundred and twenty guns.

To man the ships when built was a point of no less importance than the mere building. In former ages, the plan of manning a fleet, when one was got together, was extremely simple. The ports throughout the kingdom were closed, and a press-gang laid violent hands on every available man, who was forthwith sent on board. The pressed men were by a legal fiction supposed to be seamen; but knowing as we do the traditions of the press in our own country fifty years ago, we can have little difficulty in understanding that in France more than two hundred years since, an able-bodied man, whatever might be his trade, would find it far from easy to persuade his captors that he was not a seaman; and that, seaman or not, when once pressed, he had to serve. This system Colbert attempted to abolish. He did, in fact, abolish it in name, and substituted a strict enrolment of sailors in all the provinces of the seaboard. The maritime population was thus divided into three classes, one of which was called out for service every year. Of this year they actually served six months, and if no longer wanted, received half-pay for the other six. In the two years which intervened before their turn came round again, they were free to serve in merchant ships, or employ themselves as they liked. The system, however, did not fully answer the expectations which the minister had formed; the men were suspicious, and evaded the enrolment; a promise half made, that those who were enrolled should be exempt from taxation was never fulfilled; the half-pay which was distinctly agreed on could not be paid when the war which began in 1672 was calling for all the money which the kingdom could raise; but above all, the new system, by doing away with many opportunities for jobbing, militated so directly against the personal interests of several officers in high position, that it became to a great extent a dead letter. And the necessities of the state itself practically abrogated the law; for whenever war broke out, the class of the year was insufficient, so that all the classes were called

on, in addition to which the ports were closed, and the press again instituted. The men thus found themselves in a worse position than ever. Obligated as they were by the law to serve when it was their turn, and seized on by the press when it was not, it is not to be wondered at that they had recourse to all possible subterfuges and evasions to escape the enrolment. The fleets, however, were manned, and in the course of time many out of the different crews doubtless became more reconciled to the service, and settled down into regular men-of-war's men. These formed a future nucleus, and the system of enrolment by classes, modified considerably according to the requirements of the state, or as experience suggested improvements, remained in force for a full century after Colbert's death, and may fairly be considered as the base of the system which exists at the present day.

As supplemental to the sailors of the fleet, of whom he was unable to find a sufficient number, Colbert formed in 1669 two regiments of infantry, of 3,000 men each, to serve in detachments on board the ships, in a manner precisely similar to our own marines. These, there can be little doubt, would have been a valuable adjunct to the crews, had not the jealousy of Louvois, who insisted on having the appointment of the officers, rendered the plan abortive. The officers so appointed, receiving their commissions from, and dependent for promotion on, the Secretary of State for War, had little care to win the good opinion of the Secretary for the Navy, or of the naval officers under whom they served. Being put on the same footing, with regard to pay and promotion, as the officers of the line regiments, instead of enjoying the peculiar advantages and privileges which Colbert had offered in the first instance, they conceived a distaste for the service afloat, which enhanced their insubordinate disposition, and led to such constant difficulties and quarrels, that in 1671, only two years after they were raised, they were turned over to the regular army, and soldiers for the service afloat were entered as each ship was put in commission.

The difficulty of finding officers for the ships was scarcely less than that of finding men. A few there were, indeed, who had served in the time of Richelieu, or had since learned the profession on board the Maltese cruisers. These, however, were far from sufficient in number, so that officers of the army were transferred, in a wholesale manner, to the sister service, and gradually attained a certain amount of nautical skill under the instruction of the merchant skippers who were, at the time, the real sailing-masters of the ships. But it was far from Colbert's idea that this state of things should continue. He resolved that the officers of the several ships should be such in reality, as well as in name; and being convinced of the advantage of early training, he instituted a body of cadets which remained in existence till the Revolution. These cadets, under the title of "*Gardes de la Marine*," were all gentlemen by birth, and served on board as volun-

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teers until they received their promotion to the rank of ensign. They were, in fact, on very much the same footing as midshipmen in our own navy, and performed the same duties, but their advancement as a rule was speedy, for the necessities of the country required officers. These, as they grew up to be men, having been carefully instructed in their profession, theoretically and practically, formed a very valuable class; though the pride of birth, in many instances, led them into difficulties with others who, by long or daring service, had won their promotion from an inferior rank of life. For of these there was a considerable number;—a number, too, which increased rapidly when war, putting a check on the rising commerce, converted the bold skipper of many a fishing or coasting boat into a dashing privateer, and in time into the commander of his majesty's ships and squadrons. Such men were, in the succeeding age, Jean Bart and Du Guay-Trouin, whose exploits, although for the most part performed with but small force, read more like the romantic tales of the Knights of the Round Table, than the sober history of the seventeenth or eighteenth century. The almost equally celebrated colleague of these, De Forbin, was, on the other hand, a cadet of the aristocratic guards, and served as such in the expedition to Messina in 1675. De Langeron also was a cadet a few years senior, and having stepped over the intermediate grades, served as a captain in the same expedition. Tourville, who commanded the French fleets in the battles of Beachey Head and La Hogue, commenced his career on board a Maltese galley, and quitting the active service of the order in a fit of pique, won at an early age considerable renown by a series of enterprises in the Levant, which were then counted as honourable, but which in a time of stricter morality would have conducted him to the gallows. It was not till 1667 that he entered the service of the French king. Château-Renault also was a knight of St. John. Du Quesne, whose conduct on the coast of Sicily rendered his name dear to France, a skilful and daring officer, but of a most perverse and quarrelsome disposition, was one of the old school, his commission as captain dating back as far as 1628. Count d'Estrées, who for some years held the chief command over the French fleets of the West, was a landsman until his appointment as Vice-Admiral of France in 1669; as also was the Marquis de Villette till he was forty years old. These are some of the men who occupied a distinguished position in the navy of Louis XIV.; and it is not a little interesting to notice the different points from which they started, the more especially as we know that the same diversity was general throughout all ranks. But as the navy became more and more a settled institution, as the ships' companies were more regularly raised by enrolment, the officers were also more commonly, and latterly almost entirely, entered as cadets of the guard and trained to the discipline of the service from their youth. Officers not gentlemen by birth were rare during the second

half of the eighteenth century; and it was this exclusiveness which, on the breaking out of the Revolution, turned the popular rage against them in a manner so fatal both to themselves and to the French navy.

In the time of which we are speaking, however, when there were no precedents to guide their conduct, when passions were more unrestrained, when public morality was a thing little understood, there was considerable difficulty in binding the different elements together so that they might act in unison. The executive officers were inclined to treat the civil officers with disdain; the sailors looked down on the landmen; the aristocratic cadets scorned the company of their more humbly-descended messmates; quarrels were never ending; duels were frequent; insubordination was by no means rare; the captains, and even the admirals, set but a bad example to the lieutenants and ensigns; the enmity between D'Estrées and Du Quesne was notorious; and although the latter was palpably in the wrong, though his conduct as an inferior officer towards his superior was contrary to all the rules of military service, still the need which the kingdom had of officers possessing ability and experience was so great, that Colbert could do nothing more than persuade, entreat, or threaten. With the juniors he took a more decided tone. In their cases threats were generally followed by punishment which might in some instances be counted unduly harsh, did we lose sight of the extreme danger which the navy ran of being utterly disorganised by the existing unruly spirit.

The dishonesty of the commissaries presented another serious difficulty. Embezzlement of money and fraudulently making away with stores were crimes painfully common; and the temptation to the captains, who acted also as the pursers of their ships, to enrich themselves by serving out provisions in short allowance and of inferior quality was not often resisted. These were taxes on the energy of the minister against which few beside Colbert could have made adequate resistance; but his iron will sustained him, and he did in the course of time succeed in getting together a body of officers, who could, under heavy pressure, live together without brawling, and under constant surveillance, could take charge of stores without stealing; but whilst these were being selected, the number of those who were dismissed, disgraced, or imprisoned, was very large.

The mere numerical strength to which the exertions of Colbert raised the French navy was alone sufficient to give it prestige in the eyes of Europe. It was not till the year 1676 that it had any opportunity of endeavouring to win that prestige by force of arms. The skill of the officers and crews must, however, have been still far below the standard to which natural aptitude and long experience had raised the Dutch, especially while under the command of an admiral like De Ruyter. In the battle of Alicudi, on the 8th of January, notwithstand-

ing their superiority in number, size, and in the equipment of their ships which were fresh from Toulon with complete crews,—notwithstanding their superiority in number and weight of guns, the French were not able to gain even the semblance of an advantage over their hardy enemy. On the 22nd of April, off Agosta, De Ruyter with ten ships,—separated from the rest of his fleet by a division of the most incapable of allies,—held at bay and virtually beat back the whole French fleet,—a splendid achievement, dearly paid for by the wound which proved mortal after seven days. And whatever we may think of the arrogance or imbecility of the Spanish Government, or of the weakness of the Spanish navy, it is still evident, that the careful administration of Colbert, whilst able to build and equip ships in a manner equal to those of any country in Europe, was not able to improvise, in a similar way, a race of men who could be compared with the sailors of Holland.

The detailed accounts of these battles were, however, by no means generally known through the kingdom of France. The government of Louis XIV. was perfectly well skilled in the art of spreading favourable news; and Colbert in particular held it as a point of duty to speak highly of the achievements of the navy. In 1672, after the battle of Solbay, he had repeatedly expressed his indignation at the modest way in which the Count d'Estrées had spoken of the French share in the action, and had given positive orders that all reports meant for the public eye should be made as favourable as possible. If this was the case after the battle of Solbay, when whatever accounts tended to the glory of the French navy must have contained a very large proportion of fiction, it was much more so in 1676, when two actions had been fought, against De Ruyter, without defeat; and when,—at Palermo, on the 2nd of June,—one very decided success had been gained. This indeed was so complete a victory that the French minister had very solid grounds for congratulating the navy and the country on the splendid achievement. The other two battles got mixed up with it, in the popular mind; and the general impression throughout the kingdom was that the fleet under Du Quesne had completely defeated the Dutch with De Ruyter at their head. The death of De Ruyter lent a colour to this view; and the imagined victory over De Ruyter has been spoken of in glowing language by writers whose researches into the history of the time ought to have cleared away all confusion.

The three battles, however, deservedly won a marquisate for Du Quesne; the veteran's grumblings were forgotten in the splendour of his victory; and even Colbert, laying aside his usual coldness, wrote to express his joy and satisfaction at the result of the campaign. We can indeed easily understand that his satisfaction must have been very great. The successes on the coast of Sicily were the proof to the public of the success of his endeavour to form a navy;—the proof to himself perhaps that his navy was capable of real service, and not

merely one that might look well in the roadstead, or appear formidable on paper. To us, acquainted with the difficulties against which he had to contend, the figures which represent its strength are a conclusive proof of the talent and energy which he had employed. We have already given the number of ships of all classes actually afloat during the last year of the Dutch war as 199. To officer these, there were on the official list 86 captains, 116 lieutenants, and 136 ensigns; admirals, commanders of different grades, and officers holding exceptional posts, brought the number up to 416. After the peace the numerical strength of the navy was not much increased during Colbert's life, though his zeal for its efficiency does not seem to have suffered any diminution; and on his death in 1683, his son, the Marquis de Seignelay, succeeded to the administration of a force which in respect to equipment and organisation was far superior to that maintained by any other power in the world.

If it were on the foundation of this alone that the claims of Colbert's memory to the gratitude of France were based, he would even then be deservedly celebrated as one of the most distinguished of her sons. When to that, the principal and grandest labour of his life, we join the consideration of the numerous other tasks which he accomplished, of the permanent advantages which accrued from his ministry; when we consider the enormous stimulus which he gave to manufactures and commerce; the way in which he opened out the internal resources of the kingdom by the construction of roads and canals, and in an especial degree by the construction of the canal of Languedoc, which had been the dream of so many former reigns, we are driven to the conclusion that not only in France, but in the civilised world, he stands pre-eminent as the minister who has worked most successfully for the lasting benefit of his country.

And yet he died hated by the people, and all but disgraced by the King. There is, indeed, reason to believe that jealousy of Louvois and chagrin at the coldness of the King aggravated and rendered fatal an illness which was brought on, in the first instance, by the severe toil to which he had subjected himself, without necessary repose. This toil was indeed excessive. During many years he worked in his office regularly for sixteen hours a day, and the results testify that the time was not lightly employed. It was not the mere force of genius which enabled him to accomplish such mighty tasks. The labour which they cost him is manifest on every page of his voluminous writings; and whilst our opinion of his natural gifts is at the highest, we cannot but acknowledge that the gift which, of all others, conduced the most to his success, was his wonderful industry and determination.

In his comparative loss of the favour of the vain and versatile King, there is perhaps nothing strange, but we might be surprised at the bad odour in which his name was held by the people. This may

in part be attributed to the stern and cold manner which was natural to him, and caused him to be spoken of as "the man of marble." Many anecdotes are told of him which well illustrate his claim to the title; amongst others, this;—Madame Cornuel, who was celebrated in society for her wit and lively disposition, had one day attempted to persuade him to grant her some favour. Colbert listened to all she had to say without making any answer, till at last, piqued by his silence, the lady exclaimed, "Monseigneur, faites moi au moins signe que vous m'entendez." In part also it may be attributed to the bold and unsparing way in which he put down many class privileges. We have spoken already of the hostile feeling he excited by doing away with crowds of special exemptions from taxation; and other instances were not unfrequent where he had steadily pursued what he conceived to be the path of duty, without too much regard to the class prejudices of those for whom he legislated. The enemies whom he thus stirred up were men for the most part of good position and provincial authority; and of the dirt which they relentlessly flung on his reputation, some doubtless adhered in the esteem of the vulgar.

But, above all, it was notorious that, being a man of humble origin, he had provided splendidly for all his relations, and had amassed a very large fortune. It is impossible to think that the ten millions to which this amounted were not acquired in a strictly legal manner, more especially as he made no secret of the amount; but the people could not help looking with suspicion on a minister who, during twenty-two years of great financial distress,—for the Dutch war pressed heavily on the tax-payers,—had managed, with but a small nominal salary, to accumulate such a sum. The libels and savage epigrams which appeared after his death, when the terror which his resolute conduct had inspired no longer restrained the scribblers of the day, were almost countless. Gross and frantic as most of them are, they still, with scarcely an exception, cling to his dishonesty as the assailable point in his character. The following verse of one of them embodies the general spirit, with a certain sparkle of wit to relieve the uncommonly plain-speaking which runs through the rest of the ode:—

"Enfin Colbert n'est plus, et c'est vous faire entendre
Que la France est réduite au plus bas de son sort,
Car s'il restoit encore quelque chose à lui prendre,
Le voleur ne seroit pas mort."

We do not, as we have said, attach much importance to these charges. It is scarcely credible that a man of Colbert's acumen would have laid himself open to such from a legal point of view; but the ten millions remain, a fatal proof that whatever the law might think of his conduct, he could not say on his death-bed, with our English admiral, Sir George Rooke, "I do not leave much, but what I leave was honestly gotten. It never cost a sailor a tear, or the nation a farthing."

PHINEAS FINN, THE IRISH MEMBER.

CHAPTER LIV.

CONSOLATION.

On the day following Madame Goesler's dinner party, Phineas, though he was early at his office, was not able to do much work, still feeling that as regarded the realities of the world, his back was broken. He might no doubt go on learning, and, after a time, might be able to exert himself in a perhaps useful, but altogether uninteresting kind of way, doing his work simply because it was there to be done,—as the carter or the tailor does his ;—and from the same cause, knowing that a man must have bread to live. But as for ambition, and the idea of doing good, and the love of work for work's sake,—as for the elastic springs of delicious and beneficent labour,—all that was over for him. He would have worked from day till night, and from night till day, and from month till month throughout the year to have secured for Violet Effingham the assurance that her husband's position was worthy of her own. But now he had no motive for such work as this. As long as he took the public pay, he would earn it ; and that was all.

On the next day things were a little better with him. He received a note in the morning from Lord Cantrip saying that they two were to see the Prime Minister that evening, in order that the whole question of the railway to the Rocky Mountains might be understood, and Phineas was driven to his work. Before the time of the meeting came he had once more lost his own identity in great ideas of colonial welfare, and had planned and peopled a mighty region on the Red River, which should have no sympathy with American democracy. When he waited upon Mr. Gresham in the afternoon he said nothing about the mighty region ; indeed, he left it to Lord Cantrip to explain most of the proposed arrangements,—speaking only a word or two here and there as occasion required. But he was aware that he had so far recovered as to be able to save himself from losing ground during the interview.

"He's about the first Irishman we've had that has been worth his salt," said Mr. Gresham to his colleague afterwards.

"That other Irishman was a terrible fellow," said Lord Cantrip, shaking his head.

On the fourth day after his sorrow had befallen him, Phineas went again to the cottage in Park Lane. And in order that he might not

he balked in his search for sympathy he wrote a line to Madame Goesler to ask if she would be at home. "I will be at home from five to six,—and alone.—M. M. G." That was the answer from Marie Max Goesler, and Phineas was of course at the cottage a few minutes after five. It is not, I think, surprising that a man when he wants sympathy in such a calamity as that which had now befallen Phineas Finn, should seek it from a woman. Women sympathise most effectually with men, as men do with women. But it is, perhaps, a little odd that a man when he wants consolation because his heart has been broken, always likes to receive it from a pretty woman. One would be disposed to think that at such a moment he would be profoundly indifferent to such a matter, that no delight could come to him from female beauty, and that all he would want would be the softness of a simply sympathetic soul. But he generally wants a soft hand as well, and an eye that can be bright behind the mutual tear, and lips that shall be young and fresh as they express their concern for his sorrow. All these things were added to Phineas when he went to Madame Goesler in his grief.

"I am so glad to see you," said Madame Max.

"You are very good-natured to let me come."

"No;—but it is so good of you to trust me. But I was sure you would come after what took place the other night. I saw that you were pained, and I was so sorry for it."

"I made such a fool of myself."

"Not at all. And I thought that you were right to tell them when the question had been asked. If the thing was not to be kept a secret, it was better to speak it out. You will get over it quicker in that way than in any other. I have never seen the young lord, myself."

"Oh, there is nothing amiss about him. As to what Lord Fawn said, the half of it is simply exaggeration, and the other half is misunderstood."

"In this country it is so much to be a lord," said Madame Goesler.

Phineas thought a moment of that matter before he replied. All the Standish family had been very good to him, and Violet Effingham had been very good. It was not the fault of any of them that he was now wretched and back-broken. He had meditated much on this, and had resolved that he would not even think evil of them. "I do not in my heart believe that that has had anything to do with it," he said.

"But it has, my friend,—always. I do not know your Violet Effingham."

"She is not mine."

"Well;—I do not know this Violet that is not yours. I have met her, and did not specially admire her. But then the tastes of men and women about beauty are never the same. But I know she

is one that always lives with lords and countesses. A girl who has always lived with countesses feels it to be hard to settle down as a plain Mistress."

"She has had plenty of choice among all sorts of men. It was not the title. She would not have accepted Chiltern unless she had——. But what is the use of talking of it?"

"They had known each other long?"

"Oh, yes,—as children. And the Earl desired it of all things."

"Ah;—then he arranged it."

"Not exactly. Nobody could arrange anything for Chiltern,—nor, as far as that goes, for Miss Effingham. They arranged it themselves, I fancy."

"You had asked her?"

"Yes;—twice. And she had refused him more than twice. I have nothing for which to blame her; but yet I had thought,—I had thought——"

"She is a jilt then?"

"No;—I will not let you say that of her. She is no jilt. But I think she has been strangely ignorant of her own mind. What is the use of talking of it, Madame Goesler?"

"No;—only sometimes it is better to speak a word, than to keep one's sorrow to oneself."

"So it is;—and there is not one in the world to whom I can speak such a word, except yourself. Is not that odd? I have sisters, but they have never heard of Miss Effingham, and would be quite indifferent."

"Perhaps they have some other favourites."

"Ah;—well. That does not matter. And my best friend here in London is Lord Chiltern's own sister."

"She knew of your attachment?"

"Oh, yes."

"And she told you of Miss Effingham's engagement. Was she glad of it?"

"She has always desired the marriage. And yet I think she would have been satisfied had it been otherwise. But of course her heart must be with her brother. I need not have troubled myself to go to Blankenburgh after all."

"It was for the best, perhaps. Everybody says you behaved so well."

"I could not but go, as the things were there."

"What if you had—shot him?"

"There would have been an end of everything. She would never have seen me after that. Indeed I should have shot myself next, feeling that there was nothing else left for me to do."

"Ah;—you English are so peculiar. But I suppose it is best not to shoot a man. And, Mr. Finn, there are other ladies in the world

prettier than Miss Violet Effingham. No;—of course you will not admit that now. Just at this moment, and for a month or two, she is peerless, and you will feel yourself to be of all men the most unfortunate. But you have the ball at your feet. I know no one so young who has got the ball at his feet so well. I call it nothing to have the ball at your feet if you are born with it there. It is so easy to be a lord if your father is one before you,—and so easy to marry a pretty girl if you can make her a countess. But to make yourself a lord, or to be as good as a lord, when nothing has been born to you,—that I call very much. And there are women, and pretty women, too, Mr. Finn, who have spirit enough to understand this, and to think that the man, after all, is more important than the lord.” Then she sang the old well-worn verse of the Scotch song with wonderful spirit, and with a clearness of voice and knowledge of music for which he had hitherto never given her credit.

“A prince can mak’ a belted knight,
A marquis, duke, and a’ that;
But an honest man’s aboon his might,
Guid faith he mauna fa’ that.”

“I did not know that you sung, Madame Goesler.”

“Only now and then when something specially requires it. And I am very fond of Scotch songs. I will sing to you now if you like it.” Then she sang the whole song,—“A man’s a man for a’ that,” she said as she finished. “Even though he cannot get the special bit of painted Eve’s flesh for which his heart has had a craving.” Then she sang again :—

“There are maidens in Scotland more lovely by far,
Who would gladly be bride to the young Lochinvar.”

“But young Lochinvar got his bride,” said Phineas.

“Take the spirit of the lines, Mr. Finn, which is true; and not the tale as it is told, which is probably false. I often think that Jock of Hazledean, and young Lochinvar too, probably lived to repent their bargains. We will hope that Lord Chiltern may not do so.”

“I am sure he never will.”

“That is all right. And as for you, do you for a while think of your politics, and your speeches, and your colonies, rather than of your love. You are at home there, and no Lord Chiltern can rob you of your success. And if you are down in the mouth, come to me, and I will sing you a Scotch song. And, look you, the next time I ask you to dinner I will promise you that Mrs. Bonteen shall not be here. Good-bye.” She gave him her hand, which was very soft, and left it for a moment in his, and he was consoled.

Madame Goesler, when she was alone, threw herself on to her chair and began to think of things. In these days she would often ask herself what in truth was the object of her ambition, and the

aim of her life. Now at this moment she had in her hand a note from the Duke of Omnium. The Duke had allowed himself to say something about a photograph, which had justified her in writing to him,—or which she had taken for such justification. And the Duke had replied. "He would not," he said, "lose the opportunity of waiting upon her in person which the presentation of the little gift might afford him." It would be a great success to have the Duke of Omnium at her house,—but to what would the success reach? What was her definite object,—or had she any? In what way could she make herself happy? She could not say that she was happy yet. The hours with her were too long and the days too many.

The Duke of Omnium should come,—if he would. And she was quite resolved as to this,—that if the Duke did come she would not be afraid of him. Heavens and earth! What would be the feelings of such a woman as her, were the world to greet her some fine morning as Duchess of Omnium! Then she made up her mind very resolutely on one subject. Should the Duke give her any opportunity she would take a very short time in letting him know what was the extent of her ambition.

CHAPTER LV.

LORD CHILTERN AT SAULSBY.

LORD CHILTERN did exactly as he said he would do. He wrote to his father as he passed through Carlisle, and at once went on to his hunting at Willingford. But his letter was very stiff and ungainly, and it may be doubted whether Miss Effingham was not wrong in refusing the offer which he had made to her as to the dictation of it. He began his letter, "My Lord," and did not much improve the style as he went on with it. The reader may as well see the whole letter;—

"Railway Hotel, Carlisle,

"December 27, 186—.

"MY LORD,

"I am now on my way from Loughlinter to London, and write this letter to you in compliance with a promise made by me to my sister and to Miss Effingham. I have asked Violet to be my wife, and she has accepted me, and they think that you will be pleased to hear that this has been done. I shall be, of course, obliged, if you will instruct Mr. Edwards to let me know what you would propose to do in regard to settlements. Laura thinks that you will wish to see both Violet and myself at Saulsby. For myself, I can only say that, should you desire me to come, I will do so on receiving your assurance

that I shall be treated neither with fatted calves nor with reproaches. I am not aware that I have deserved either.

"I am, my lord, yours affect.,

"CHILTERN.

"P.S.—My address will be 'The Bull, Willingford.'"

That last word, in which he half-declared himself to be joined in affectionate relations to his father, caused him a world of trouble. But he could find no term for expressing, without a circumlocution which was disagreeable to him, exactly that position of feeling towards his father which really belonged to him. He would have written "yours with affection," or "yours with deadly enmity," or "yours with respect," or "yours with most profound indifference," exactly in accordance with the state of his father's mind, if he had only known what was that state. He was afraid of going beyond his father in any offer of reconciliation, and was firmly fixed in his resolution that he would never be either repentant or submissive in regard to the past. If his father had wishes for the future, he would comply with them if he could do so without unreasonable inconvenience, but he would not give way a single point as to things done and gone. If his father should choose to make any reference to them, his father must prepare for battle.

The Earl was of course disgusted by the pertinacious obstinacy of his son's letter, and for an hour or two swore to himself that he would not answer it. But it is natural that the father should yearn for the son, while the son's feeling for the father is of a very much weaker nature. Here, at any rate, was that engagement made which he had ever desired. And his son had made a step, though it was so very unsatisfactory a step, towards reconciliation. When the old man read the letter a second time, he skipped that reference to fatted calves which had been so peculiarly distasteful to him, and before the evening had passed he had answered his son as follows;—

"Saulsby, December 29, 186—.

"MY DEAR CHILTERN,

"I have received your letter, and am truly delighted to hear that dear Violet has accepted you as her husband. Her fortune will be very material to you, but she herself is better than any fortune. You have long known my opinion of her. I shall be proud to welcome her as a daughter to my house.

"I shall of course write to her immediately, and will endeavour to settle some early day for her coming here. When I have done so, I will write to you again, and can only say that I will endeavour to make Saulsby comfortable to you.

"Your affectionate father,

"BRENTFORD.

"Richards, the groom, is still here. You had perhaps better write to him direct about your horses."

By the middle of February arrangements had all been made, and Violet met her lover at his father's house. She in the meantime had been with her aunt, and had undergone a good deal of mild unceasing persecution. "My dear Violet," said her aunt to her on her arrival at Baddingham, speaking with a solemnity that ought to have been terrible to the young lady, "I do not know what to say to you."

"Say 'how d'you do?' aunt," said Violet.

"I mean about this engagement," said Lady Baldock, with an increase of awe-inspiring severity in her voice.

"Say nothing about it at all, if you don't like it," said Violet.

"How can I say nothing about it? How can I be silent? Or how am I to congratulate you?"

"The least said, perhaps, the soonest mended," and Violet smiled as she spoke.

"That is very well, and if I had no duty to perform, I would be silent. But, Violet, you have been left in my charge. If I see you shipwrecked in life, I shall ever tell myself that the fault has been partly mine."

"Nay, aunt, that will be quite unnecessary. I will always admit that you did everything in your power to—to—to—make me run straight, as the sporting men say."

"Sporting men! Oh, Violet."

"And you know, aunt, I still hope that I shall be found to have kept on the right side of the posts. You will find that poor Lord Chiltern is not so black as he is painted."

"But why take anybody that is black at all?"

"I like a little shade in the picture, aunt."

"Look at Lord Fawn."

"I have looked at him."

"A young nobleman beginning a career of useful official life, that will end in——; there is no knowing what it may end in."

"I dare say not;—but it never could have begun or ended in my being Lady Fawn."

"And Mr. Appledom!"

"Poor Mr. Appledom. I do like Mr. Appledom. But, you see, aunt, I like Lord Chiltern so much better. A young woman will go by her feelings."

"And yet you refused him a dozen times."

"I never counted the times, aunt; but not quite so many as that."

The same thing was repeated over and over again during the month that Miss Effingham remained at Baddingham, but Lady Baldock had no power of interfering, and Violet bore her persecution bravely. Her future husband was generally spoken of as "that violent young man,"

and hints were thrown out as to the personal injuries to which his wife might be possibly subjected. But the threatened bride only laughed, and spoke of these coming dangers as part of the general lot of married women. "I dare say, if the truth were known, my uncle Baldock did not always keep his temper," she once said. Now, the truth was, as Violet well knew, that "my uncle Baldock" had been dumb as a sheep before the shearers in the hands of his wife, and had never been known to do anything improper by those who had been most intimate with him even in his earlier days. "Your uncle Baldock, miss," said the outraged aunt, "was a nobleman as different in his manner of life from Lord Chiltern as chalk from cheese." "But then comes the question, which is the cheese?" said Violet. Lady Baldock would not argue the question any further, but stalked out of the room.

Lady Laura Kennedy met them at Saulsby, having had something of a battle with her husband before she left her home to do so. When she told him of her desire to assist at this reconciliation between her father and brother, he replied by pointing out that her first duty was at Loughlinter, and before the interview was ended had come to express an opinion that that duty was very much neglected. She in the meantime had declared that she would go to Saulsby, or that she would explain to her father that she was forbidden by her husband to do so. "And I also forbid any such communication," said Mr. Kennedy. In answer to which, Lady Laura told him that there were some marital commands which she should not consider it to be her duty to obey. When matters had come to this pass, it may be conceived that both Mr. Kennedy and his wife were very unhappy. She had almost resolved that she would take steps to enable her to live apart from her husband; and he had begun to consider what course he would pursue if such steps were taken. The wife was subject to her husband by the laws both of God and man; and Mr. Kennedy was one who thought much of such laws. In the meantime, Lady Laura carried her point and went to Saulsby, leaving her husband to go up to London and begin the session by himself.

Lady Laura and Violet were both at Saulsby before Lord Chiltern arrived, and many were the consultations which were held between them as to the best mode in which things might be arranged. Violet was of opinion that there had better be no arrangement, that Chiltern should be allowed to come in and take his father's hand, and sit down to dinner,—and that so things should fall into their places. Lady Laura was rather in favour of some scene. But the interview had taken place before either of them were able to say a word. Lord Chiltern, on his arrival, had gone immediately to his father, taking the Earl very much by surprise, and had come off best in the encounter.

"My lord," said he, walking up to his father with his hand out,

"I am very glad to come back to Saulsby." He had written to his sister to say that he would be at Saulsby on that day, but had named no hour. He now appeared between ten and eleven in the morning, and his father had as yet made no preparation for him,—had arranged no appropriate words. He had walked in at the front door, and had asked for the Earl. The Earl was in his own morning-room,—a gloomy room, full of dark books and darker furniture, and thither Lord Chiltern had at once gone. The two women still were sitting together over the fire in the breakfast-room, and knew nothing of his arrival.

"Oswald!" said his father, "I hardly expected you so early."

"I have come early. I came across country, and slept at Birmingham. I suppose Violet is here."

"Yes, she is here,—and Laura. They will be very glad to see you. So am I." And the father took the son's hand for the second time.

"Thank you, sir," said Lord Chiltern, looking his father full in the face.

"I have been very much pleased by this engagement," continued the Earl.

"What do you think I must be, then?" said the son, laughing. "I have been at it, you know, off and on, ever so many years; and have sometimes thought I was quite a fool not to get it out of my head. But I couldn't get it out of my head. And now she talks as though it were she who had been in love with me all the time!"

"Perhaps she was," said the father.

"I don't believe it in the least. She may be a little so now."

"I hope you mean that she always shall be so."

"I shan't be the worst husband in the world, I hope; and I am quite sure I shan't be the best. I will go and see her now. I suppose I shall find her somewhere in the house. I thought it best to see you first."

"Stop half a moment, Oswald," said the Earl. And then Lord Brentford did make something of a shambling speech, in which he expressed a hope that they two might for the future live together on friendly terms, forgetting the past. He ought to have been prepared for the occasion, and the speech was poor and shambling. But I think that it was more useful than it might have been, had it been uttered roundly and with that paternal and almost majestic effect which he would have achieved had he been thoroughly prepared. But the roundness and the majesty would have gone against the grain with his son, and there would have been danger of some outbreak. As it was, Lord Chiltern smiled, and muttered some word about things being "all right," and then made his way out of the room. "That's a great deal better than I had hoped," he said to himself; "and it has all come from my going in without being announced." But there

was still a fear upon him that his father even yet might prepare a speech, and speak it, to the great peril of their mutual comfort.

His meeting with Violet was of course pleasant enough. Now that she had succumbed, and had told herself and had told him that she loved him, she did not scruple to be as generous as a maiden should be who has acknowledged herself to be conquered, and has rendered herself to the conqueror. She would walk with him and ride with him, and take a lively interest in the performances of all his horses, and listen to hunting stories as long as he chose to tell them. In all this, she was so good and so loving that Lady Laura was more than once tempted to throw in her teeth her old, often-repeated assertions, that she was not prone to be in love,—that it was not her nature to feel any ardent affection for a man, and that, therefore, she would probably remain unmarried. “You begrudge me my little bits of pleasure,” Violet said, in answer to one such attack. “No;—but it is so odd to see you, of all women, become so love-lorn.” “I am not love-lorn,” said Violet, “but I like the freedom of telling him everything and of hearing everything from him, and of having him for my own best friend. He might go away for twelve months, and I should not be unhappy, believing, as I do, that he would be true to me.” All of which set Lady Laura thinking whether her friend had not been wiser than she had been. She had never known anything of that sort of friendship with her husband which already seemed to be quite established between these two.

In her misery one day Lady Laura told the whole story of her own unhappiness to her brother, saying nothing of Phineas Finn,—thinking nothing of him as she told her story, but speaking more strongly perhaps than she should have done, of the terrible dreariness of her life at Loughlinter, and of her inability to induce her husband to alter it for her sake.

“Do you mean that he,—ill-treats you,” said the brother, with a scowl on his face which seemed to indicate that he would like no task better than that of resenting such ill-treatment.

“He does not beat me, if you mean that.”

“Is he cruel to you? Does he use harsh language?”

“He never said a word in his life either to me or, as I believe, to any other human being, that he would think himself bound to regret.”

“What is it then?”

“He simply chooses to have his own way, and his way cannot be my way. He is hard, and dry, and just, and dispassionate, and he wishes me to be the same. That is all.”

“I tell you fairly, Laura, as far as I am concerned, I never could speak to him. He is antipathetic to me. But then I am not his wife.”

“I am;—and I suppose I must bear it.”

"Have you spoken to my father?"

"No."

"Or to Violet?"

"Yes."

"And what does she say?"

"What can she say? She has nothing to say. Nor have you. Nor, if I am driven to leave him, can I make the world understand why I do so. To be simply miserable, as I am, is nothing to the world."

"I could never understand why you married him."

"Do not be cruel to me, Oswald."

"Cruel! I will stick by you in any way that you wish. If you think well of it, I will go off to Loughlinter to-morrow, and tell him that you will never return to him. And if you are not safe from him here at Saulsby, you shall go abroad with us. I am sure Violet would not object. I will not be cruel to you."

But in truth neither of Lady Laura's councillors were able to give her advice that could serve her. She felt that she could not leave her husband without other cause than now existed, although she felt, also, that to go back to him was to go back to utter wretchedness. And when she saw Violet and her brother together there came to her dreams of what might have been her own happiness had she kept herself free from those terrible bonds in which she was now held a prisoner. She could not get out of her heart the remembrance of that young man who would have been her lover, if she would have let him,—of whose love for herself she had been aware before she had handed herself over as a bale of goods to her unloved, unloving husband. She had married Mr. Kennedy because she was afraid that otherwise she might find herself forced to own that she loved that other man who was then a nobody;—almost a nobody. It was not Mr. Kennedy's money that had bought her. This woman in regard to money had shown herself to be as generous as the sun. But in marrying Mr. Kennedy she had maintained herself in her high position, among the first of her own people,—among the first socially and among the first politically. But had she married Phineas,—had she become Lady Laura Finn,—there would have been a great descent. She could not have entertained the leading men of her party. She would not have been on a level with the wives and daughters of Cabinet Ministers. She might, indeed, have remained unmarried! But she knew that had she done so,—had she so resolved,—that which she called her fancy would have been too strong for her. She would not have remained unmarried. At that time it was her fate to be either Lady Laura Kennedy or Lady Laura Finn. And she had chosen to be Lady Laura Kennedy. To neither Violet Effingham nor to her brother could she tell one half of the sorrow which afflicted her.

"I shall go back to Loughlinter," she said to her brother.

"Do not, unless you wish it," he answered.

"I do not wish it. But I shall do it. Mr. Kennedy is in London now, and has been there since Parliament met, but he will be in Scotland again in March, and I will go and meet him there. I told him that I would do so when I left."

"But you will go up to London?"

"I suppose so. I must do as he tells me, of course. What I mean is, I will try it for another year."

"If it does not succeed, come to us."

"I cannot say what I will do. I would die if I knew how. Never be a tyrant, Oswald; or at any rate, not a cold tyrant. And remember this, there is no tyranny to a woman like telling her of her duty. Talk of beating a woman! Beating might often be a mercy."

Lord Chiltern remained ten days at Saulsby, and at last did not get away without a few unpleasant words with his father,—or without a few words that were almost unpleasant with his mistress. On his first arrival he had told his sister that he should go on a certain day, and some intimation to this effect had probably been conveyed to the Earl. But when his son told him one evening that the postchaise had been ordered for seven o'clock the next morning, he felt that his son was ungracious and abrupt. There were many things still to be said, and indeed there had been no speech of any account made at all as yet.

"That is very sudden," said the Earl.

"I thought Laura had told you."

"She has not told me a word lately. She may have said something before you came here. What is there to hurry you?"

"I thought ten days would be as long as you would care to have me here, and as I said that I would be back by the first, I would rather not change my plans."

"You are going to hunt?"

"Yes;—I shall hunt till the end of March."

"You might have hunted here, Oswald." But the son made no sign of changing his plans; and the father, seeing that he would not change them, became solemn and severe. There were a few words which he must say to his son,—something of a speech that he must make;—so he led the way into the room with the dark books and the dark furniture, and pointed to a great deep arm-chair for his son's accommodation. But as he did not sit down himself, neither did Lord Chiltern. Lord Chiltern understood very well how great is the advantage of a standing orator over a sitting recipient of his oratory, and that advantage he would not give to his father. "I had hoped to have an opportunity of saying a few words to you about the future," said the Earl.

"I think we shall be married in July," said Lord Chiltern.

"So I have heard;—but after that. Now I do not want to

interfere, Oswald, and of course the less so, because Violet's money will to a great degree restore the inroads which have been made upon the property."

"It will more than restore them altogether."

"Not if her estate be settled on a second son, Oswald, and I hear from Lord Baldock that that is the wish of her relations."

"She shall have her own way,—as she ought. What that way is I do not know. I have not even asked her about it. She asked me, and I told her to speak to you."

"Of course I should wish it to go with the family property. Of course that would be best."

"She shall have her own way,—as far as I am concerned."

"But it is not about that, Oswald, that I would speak. What are your plans of life when you are married?"

"Plans of life?"

"Yes;—plans of life. I suppose you have some plans. I suppose you mean to apply yourself to some useful occupation?"

"I don't know really, sir, that I am of much use for any purpose." Lord Chiltern laughed as he said this, but did not laugh pleasantly.

"You would not be a drone in the hive always?"

"As far as I can see, sir, we who call ourselves lords generally are drones."

"I deny it," said the Earl, becoming quite energetic as he defended his order. "I deny it utterly. I know no class of men who do work more useful or more honest. Am I a drone? Have I been so from my youth upwards? I have always worked, either in the one House or in the other, and those of my fellows with whom I have been most intimate have worked also. The same career is open to you."

"You mean politics?"

"Of course I mean politics."

"I don't care for politics. I see no difference in parties."

"But you should care for politics, and you should see a difference in parties. It is your duty to do so. My wish is that you should go into Parliament."

"I can't do that, sir."

"And why not?"

"In the first place, sir, you have not got a seat to offer me. You have managed matters among you in such a way that poor little Loughton has been swallowed up. If I were to canvass the electors of Smotherum, I don't think that many would look very sweet on me."

"There is the county, Oswald."

"And whom am I to turn out? I should spend four or five thousand pounds, and have nothing but vexation in return for it. I

had rather not begin that game, and indeed I am too old for Parliament. I did not take it up early enough to believe in it."

All this made the Earl very angry, and from these things they went on to worse things. When questioned again as to the future, Lord Chiltern scowled, and at last declared that it was his idea to live abroad in the summer for his wife's recreation, and somewhere down in the shires during the winter for his own. He would admit of no purpose higher than recreation, and when his father again talked to him of a nobleman's duty, he said that he knew of no other special duty than that of not exceeding his income. Then his father made a longer speech than before, and at the end of it Lord Chiltern simply wished him good night. "It's getting late, and I've promised to see Violet before I go to bed. Good-bye." Then he was off, and Lord Brentford was left there, standing with his back to the fire.

After that Lord Chiltern had a discussion with Violet, which lasted nearly half the night; and during the discussion she told him more than once that he was wrong. "Such as I am you must take me, or leave me," he said, in anger. "Nay;—there is no choice now," she answered. "I have taken you, and I will stick by you,—whether you are right or wrong. But when I think you wrong, I shall say so." He swore to her as he pressed her to his heart that she was the finest, grandest, sweetest woman that ever the world had produced. But still there was present on his palate, when he left her, the bitter taste of her reprimand.

CHAPTER LVI.

WHAT THE PEOPLE IN MARYLEBONE THOUGHT.

PHINEAS Finn, when the session began, was still hard at work upon his Canada bill, and in his work found some relief for his broken back. He went into the matter with all his energy, and before the debate came on, knew much more about the seven thousand inhabitants of some hundreds of thousands of square miles at the back of Canada, than he did of the people of London or of County Clare. And he found some consolation also in the good-nature of Madame Goesler, whose drawing-room was always open to him. He could talk freely now to Madame Goesler about Violet, and had even ventured to tell her that once, in old days, he had thought of loving Lady Laura Standish. He spoke of those days as being very old; and then he perhaps said some word to her about dear little Mary Flood Jones. I think that there was not much in his career of which he did not say something to Madame Goesler, and that he received from her a good deal of excellent advice and encouragement in the direction of his political ambition. "A man should work," she said,—“and you do work. A woman can only look on, and admire and long. What is there that I can do? I can

learn to care for these Canadians, just because you care for them. If it was the beavers that you told me of, I should have to care for the beavers." Then Phineas of course told her that such sympathy from her, was all in all to him. But the reader must not on this account suppose that he was untrue in his love to Violet Effingham. His back was altogether broken by his fall, and he was quite aware that such was the fact. Not as yet, at least, had come to him any remotest idea that a cure was possible.

Early in March he heard that Lady Laura was up in town, and of course he was bound to go to her. The information was given to him by Mr. Kennedy himself, who told him that he had been to Scotland to fetch her. In these days there was an acknowledged friendship between these two, but there was no intimacy. Indeed, Mr. Kennedy was a man who was hardly intimate with any other man. With Phineas he now and then exchanged a few words in the lobby of the House, and when they chanced to meet each other, they met as friends. Mr. Kennedy had no strong wish to see again in his house the man respecting whom he had ventured to caution his wife; but he was thoughtful; and thinking over it all, he found it better to ask him there. No one must know that there was any reason why Phineas should not come to his house;—especially as all the world knew that Phineas had protected him from the garrotters. "Lady Laura is in town now," he said; "you must go and see her before long." Phineas of course promised that he would go.

In these days Phineas was beginning to be aware that he had enemies,—though he could not understand why anybody should be his enemy now that Violet Effingham had decided against him. There was poor dear Laurence Fitzgibbon, indeed, whom he had superseded at the Colonial Office, but Laurence Fitzgibbon, to give merit where merit was due, felt no animosity against him at all. "You're welcome, me boy; you're welcome,—as far as yourself goes. But as for the party, bedad, its rotten to the core, and won't stand another session. Mind, it's I who tell you so." And the poor idle Irishman in so speaking, spoke the truth as well as he knew it. But the Ratlers and the Bonteens were Finn's bitter foes, and did not scruple to let him know that such was the case. Barrington Erle had scruples on the subject, and in a certain mildly apologetic way still spoke well of the young man, whom he had himself first introduced to political life only four years since;—but there was no earnestness or cordiality in Barrington Erle's manner, and Phineas knew that his first staunch friend could no longer be regarded as a pillar of support. But there was a set of men, quite as influential,—so Phineas thought,—as the busy politicians of the club, who were very friendly to him. These were men, generally of high position, of steady character,—hard workers,—who thought quite as much of what a man did in his office as of what he said in the House. Lords

Cantrip, Thrift, and Fawn were of this class,—and they were all very courteous to Phineas. Envious men began to say of him that he cared little now for any one of the party who had not a handle to his name, and that he preferred to live with lords and lordlings. This was hard upon him, as the great political ambition of his life was to call Mr. Monk his friend; and he would sooner have acted with Mr. Monk than with any other man in the Cabinet. But, though Mr. Monk had not deserted him, there had come to be little of late in common between the two. His life was becoming that of a parliamentary official rather than that of a politician;—whereas, though Mr. Monk was in office, his public life was purely political. Mr. Monk had great ideas of his own which he intended to hold, whether by holding them he might remain in office or be forced out of office; and he was indifferent as to the direction which things in this respect might take with him. But Phineas, who had achieved his declared object in getting into place, felt that he was almost constrained to adopt the views of others, let them be what they might. Men spoke to him, as though his parliamentary career were wholly at the disposal of the Government,—as though he were like a proxy in Mr. Gresham's pocket,—with this difference, that when directed to get up and speak on a subject he was bound to do so. This annoyed him, and he complained to Mr. Monk; but Mr. Monk only shrugged his shoulders and told him that he must make his choice. He soon discovered Mr. Monk's meaning. "If you choose to make Parliament a profession,—as you have chosen,—you can have no right even to think of independence. If the country finds you out when you are in Parliament, and then invites you to office, of course the thing is different. But the latter is a slow career, and probably would not have suited you." That was the meaning of what Mr. Monk said to him. After all, these official and parliamentary honours were greater when seen at a distance than he found them to be now that he possessed them. Mr. Low worked ten hours a day, and could rarely call a day his own; but, after all, with all this work, Mr. Low was less of a slave, was more independent, than was he, Phineas Finn, Under-Secretary of State, the friend of Cabinet Ministers, and Member of Parliament since his twenty-fifth year! He began to dislike the House, and to think it a bore to sit on the Treasury bench;—he, who a few years since had regarded Parliament as the British heaven on earth, and who, since he had been in Parliament, had looked at that bench with longing envious eyes. Laurence Fitzgibbon, who seemed to have as much to eat and drink as ever, and a bed also to lie on, could come and go in the House as he pleased, since his—resignation!

And there was a new trouble coming. The Reform Bill for England had passed; but now there was to be another Reform Bill for Ireland. Let them pass what bill they might, this would not render necessary

a new Irish election till the entire House should be dissolved. But he feared that he would be called upon to vote for the abolition of his own borough,—and for other points almost equally distasteful to him. He knew that he would not be consulted,—but would be called upon to vote, and perhaps to speak; and was certain that if he did so, there would be war between him and his constituents. Lord Tulla had already communicated to him his ideas that for certain excellent reasons Loughshane ought to be spared. But this evil was, he hoped, a distant one. It was generally thought that, as the English Reform Bill had been passed last year, and as the Irish bill, if carried, could not be immediately operative, the doing of the thing might probably be postponed to the next session.

When he first saw Lady Laura he was struck by the great change in her look and manner. She seemed to him to be old and worn, and he judged her to be wretched,—as she was. She had written to him to say that she would be at her father's house on such and such a morning, and he had gone to her there. "It is of no use your coming to Grosvenor Place," she said. "I see nobody there, and the house is like a prison." Later in the interview she told him not to come and dine there, even though Mr. Kennedy should ask him.

"And why not?" he demanded.

"Because everything would be stiff, and cold, and uncomfortable. I suppose you do not wish to make your way into a lady's house if she asks you not." There was a sort of smile on her face as she said this, but he could perceive that it was a very bitter smile. "You can easily excuse yourself."

"Yes, I can excuse myself."

"Then do so. If you are particularly anxious to dine with Mr. Kennedy, you can easily do so at your club." In the tone of her voice, and the words she used, she hardly attempted to conceal her dislike of her husband.

"And now tell me about Miss Effingham," he said.

"There is nothing for me to tell."

"Yes there is;—much to tell. You need not spare me. I do not pretend to deny to you that I have been hit hard,—so hard, that I have been nearly knocked down; but it will not hurt me now to hear of it all. Did she always love him?"

"I cannot say. I think she did after her own fashion."

"I sometimes think women would be less cruel," he said, "if they knew how great is the anguish they can cause."

"Has she been cruel to you?"

"I have nothing to complain of. But if she loved Chiltern, why did she not tell him so at once? And why——"

"This is complaining, Mr. Finn."

"I will not complain. I would not even think of it, if I could help it. Are they to be married soon?"

"In July;—so they now say."

"And where will they live?"

"Ah! no one can tell. I do not think that they agree as yet as to that. But if she has a strong wish Oswald will yield to it. He was always generous."

"I would not even have had a wish,—except to have her with me."

There was a pause for a moment, and then Lady Laura answered him with a touch of scorn in her voice,—and with some scorn, too, in her eye;—"That is all very well, Mr. Finn; but the season will not be over before there is some one else."

"There you wrong me."

"They tell me that you are already at Madame Goesler's feet."

"Madame Goesler!"

"What matters who it is as long as she is young and pretty, and has the interest attached to her of something more than ordinary position? When men tell me of the cruelty of women, I think that no woman can be really cruel because no man is capable of suffering. A woman, if she is thrown aside, does suffer."

"Do you mean to tell me, then, that I am indifferent to Miss Effingham?" When he thus spoke, I wonder whether he had forgotten that he had ever declared to this very woman to whom he was speaking, a passion for herself.

"Psha!"

"It suits you, Lady Laura, to be harsh to me, but you are not speaking your thoughts."

Then she lost all control of herself, and poured out to him the real truth that was in her. "And whose thoughts did you speak when you and I were on the braes of Loughlinter? Am I wrong in saying that change is easy to you, or have I grown to be so old that you can talk to me as though those far away follies ought to be forgotten? Was it so long ago? Talk of love! I tell you, sir, that your heart is one in which love can have no durable hold. Violet Effingham! There may be a dozen Violets after her, and you will be none the worse." Then she walked away from him to the window, and he stood still, dumb, on the spot that he had occupied. "You had better go now," she said, "and forget what has passed between us. I know that you are a gentleman, and that you will forget it." The strong idea of his mind when he heard all this was the injustice of her attack,—of the attack as coming from her, who had all but openly acknowledged that she had married a man whom she had not loved because it suited her to escape from a man whom she did love. She was reproaching him now for his fickleness in having ventured to set his heart upon another woman, when she herself had been so much worse than fickle,—so profoundly false! And yet he could not defend himself

by accusing her. What would she have had of him? What would she have proposed to him, had he questioned her as to his future, when they were together on the braes of Loughlinter? Would she not have bid him to find some one else whom he could love? Would she then have suggested to him the propriety of nursing his love for herself,—for her who was about to become another man's wife,—for her after she should have become another man's wife? And yet because he had not done so, and because she had made herself wretched by marrying a man whom she did not love, she reproached him!

He could not tell her of all this, so he fell back for his defence on words which had passed between them since the day when they had met on the braes. "Lady Laura," he said, "it is only a month or two since you spoke to me as though you wished that Violet Effingham might be my wife."

"I never wished it. I never said that I wished it. There are moments in which we try to give a child any brick on the chimney top for which it may whimper." Then there was another silence which she was the first to break. "You had better go," she said. "I know that I have committed myself, and of course I would rather be alone."

"And what would you wish that I should do?"

"Do?" she said. "What you do, can be nothing to me."

"Must we be strangers, you and I, because there was a time in which we were almost more than friends?"

"I have spoken nothing about myself, sir,—only as I have been drawn to do so by your pretence of being love-sick. You can do nothing for me,—nothing,—nothing. What is it possible that you should do for me? You are not my father, or my brother." It is not to be supposed that she wanted him to fall at her feet. It is to be supposed that had he done so her reproaches would have been hot and heavy on him; but yet it almost seemed to him as though he had no other alternative. No!—He was not her father or her brother;—nor could he be her husband. And at this very moment, as she knew, his heart was sore with love for another woman. And yet he hardly knew how, not to throw himself at her feet, and swear, that he would return now and for ever to his old passion, hopeless, sinful, degraded as it would be.

"I wish it were possible for me to do something," he said, drawing near to her.

"There is nothing to be done," she said, clasping her hands together. "For me nothing. I have before me no escape, no hope, no prospect of relief, no place of consolation. You have everything before you. You complain of a wound! You have at least shown, that such wounds with you are capable of cure. You cannot but feel that when I hear your

wailings, I must be impatient. You had better leave me now, if you please."

"And are we to be no longer friends?" he asked.

"As far as friendship can go without intercourse, I shall always be your friend."

Then he went, and as he walked down to his office, so intent was he on that which had just passed that he hardly saw the people as he met them, or was aware of the streets through which his way led him. There had been something in the later words which Lady Laura had spoken that had made him feel almost unconsciously that the injustice of her reproaches was not so great as he had at first felt it to be, and that she had some cause for her scorn. If her case was such as she had so plainly described it, what was his plight as compared with hers? He had lost his Violet, and was in pain. There must be much of suffering before him. But though Violet were lost, the world was not all blank before his eyes. He had not told himself, even in his dreariest moments, that there was before him "no escape, no hope, no prospect of relief, no place of consolation." And then he began to think whether this must in truth be the case with Lady Laura. What if Mr. Kennedy were to die? What in such case as that would he do? In ten or perhaps in five years time might it not be possible for him to go through the ceremony of falling upon his knees, with stiffened joints indeed, but still with something left of the ardour of his old love, of his oldest love of all?

As he was thinking of this he was brought up short in his walk as he was entering the Green Park beneath the Duke's figure, by Laurence Fitzgibbon. "How dare you not be in your office at such an hour as this, Finn, me boy,—or, at least, not in the House,—or serving your masters after some fashion?" said the late Under-Secretary.

"So I am. I've been on a message to Marylebone, to find what the people there think about the Canadas."

"And what do they think about the Canadas in Marylebone?"

"Not one man in a thousand cares whether the Canadians prosper or fail to prosper. They care that Canada should not go to the States, because,—though they don't love the Canadians, they do hate the Americans. That's about the feeling in Marylebone,—and it's astonishing how like the Maryleboners are to the rest of the world."

"Dear me, what a fellow you are for an Under-Secretary! You've heard the news about little Violet."

"What news?"

"She has quarrelled with Chiltern, you know."

"Who says so?"

"Never mind who says so, but they tell me it's true. Take an old friend's advice, and strike while the iron's hot."

Phineas did not believe what he had heard, but though he did not

believe it, still the tidings set his heart beating. He would have believed it less perhaps had he known that Laurence had just received the news from Mrs. Bonteen.

CHAPTER LVII.

THE TOP BRICK OF THE CHIMNEY.

MADAME MAX GOESLER was a lady who knew that in fighting the battles which fell to her lot, in arranging the social difficulties which she found in her way, in doing the work of the world which came to her share, very much more care was necessary,—and care too about things apparently trifling,—than was demanded by the affairs of people in general. And this was not the case so much on account of any special disadvantage under which she laboured, as because she was ambitious of doing the very uttermost with those advantages which she possessed. Her own birth had not been high, and that of her husband, we may perhaps say, had been very low. He had been old when she had married him, and she had had little power of making any progress till he had left her a widow. Then she found herself possessed of money, certainly ; of wit,—as she believed ; and of a something in her personal appearance which, as she plainly told herself, she might perhaps palm off upon the world as beauty. She was a woman who did not flatter herself, who did not strongly believe in herself, who could even bring herself to wonder that men and women in high position should condescend to notice such a one as her. With all her ambition, there was a something of genuine humility about her ; and with all the hardness she had learned there was a touch of womanly softness which would sometimes obtrude itself upon her heart. When she found a woman really kind to her, she would be very kind in return. And though she prized wealth, and knew that her money was her only rock of strength, she could be lavish with it, as though it were dirt.

But she was highly ambitious, and she played her game with great skill and great caution. Her doors were not opened to all callers ;—were shut even to some who find but few doors closed against them ;—were shut occasionally to those whom she most specially wished to see within them. She knew how to allure by denying, and to make the gift rich by delaying it. We are told by the Latin proverb that he who gives quickly gives twice ; but I say that she who gives quickly seldom gives more than half. When in the early spring the Duke of Omnium first knocked at Madame Max Goesler's door, he was informed that she was not at home. The Duke felt very cross as he handed his card out from his dark green brougham,—on the panel of which there was no blazon to tell of the owner's rank. He was very cross. She had told him that she was always at home

between four and six on a Thursday. He had condescended to remember the information, and had acted upon it,—and now she was not at home! She was not at home, though he had come on a Thursday at the very hour she had named to him. Any duke would have been cross, but the Duke of Omnium was particularly cross. No;—he certainly would give himself no further trouble by going to the cottage in Park Lane. And yet Madame Max Goesler had been in her own drawing-room, while the Duke was handing out his card from the brougham below.

On the next morning there came to him a note from the cottage,—such a pretty note!—so penitent, so full of remorse,—and, which was better still, so laden with disappointment, that he forgave her.

“MY DEAR DUKE,

“I hardly know how to apologise to you, after having told you that I am always at home on Thursdays; and I was at home yesterday when you called. But I was unwell, and I had told the servant to deny me, not thinking how much I might be losing. Indeed, indeed, I would not have given way to a silly headache, had I thought that your Grace would have been here. I suppose that now I must not even hope for the photograph.

“Yours penitently,

“MARIE M. G.”

The note-paper was very pretty note-paper, hardly scented, and yet conveying a sense of something sweet, and the monogram was small and new, and fantastic without being grotesque, and the writing was of that sort which the Duke, having much experience, had learned to like,—and there was something in the signature which pleased him. So he wrote a reply,—

“DEAR MADAME MAX GOESLER,

“I will call again next Thursday, or, if prevented, will let you know.

“Yours faithfully,

“O.”

When the green brougham drew up at the door of the cottage on the next Thursday, Madame Goesler was at home, and had no headache.

She was not at all penitent now. She had probably studied the subject, and had resolved that penitence was more alluring in a letter than when acted in person. She received her guest with perfect ease, and apologised for the injury done to him in the preceding week, with much self-complacency. “I was so sorry when I got your card,” she said; “and yet I am so glad now that you were refused.”

"If you were ill," said the Duke, "it was better."

"I was horribly ill, to tell the truth ;—as pale as a death's head, and without a word to say for myself. I was fit to see no one."

"Then of course you were right."

"But it flashed upon me immediately that I had named a day, and that you had been kind enough to remember it. But I did not think you came to London till the March winds were over."

"The March winds blow everywhere in this wretched island, Madame Goesler, and there is no escaping them. Youth may prevail against them ; but on me they are so potent that I think they will succeed in driving me out of my country. I doubt whether an old man should ever live in England if he can help it."

The Duke certainly was an old man, if a man turned of seventy be old ;—and he was a man too who did not bear his years with hearty strength. He moved slowly, and turned his limbs, when he did turn them, as though the joints were stiff in their sockets. But there was nevertheless about him a dignity of demeanour, a majesty of person, and an upright carriage which did not leave an idea of old age as the first impress on the minds of those who encountered the Duke of Omnium. He was tall and moved without a stoop ; and though he moved slowly, he had learned to seem so to do because it was the proper kind of movement for one so high up in the world as himself. And perhaps his tailor did something for him. He had not been long under Madame Max Goesler's eyes before she perceived that his tailor had done a good deal for him. When he alluded to his own age and to her youth, she said some pleasant little word as to the difference between oak-trees and currant-bushes ; and by that time she was seated comfortably on her sofa, and the Duke was on a chair before her,—just as might have been any man who was not a Duke.

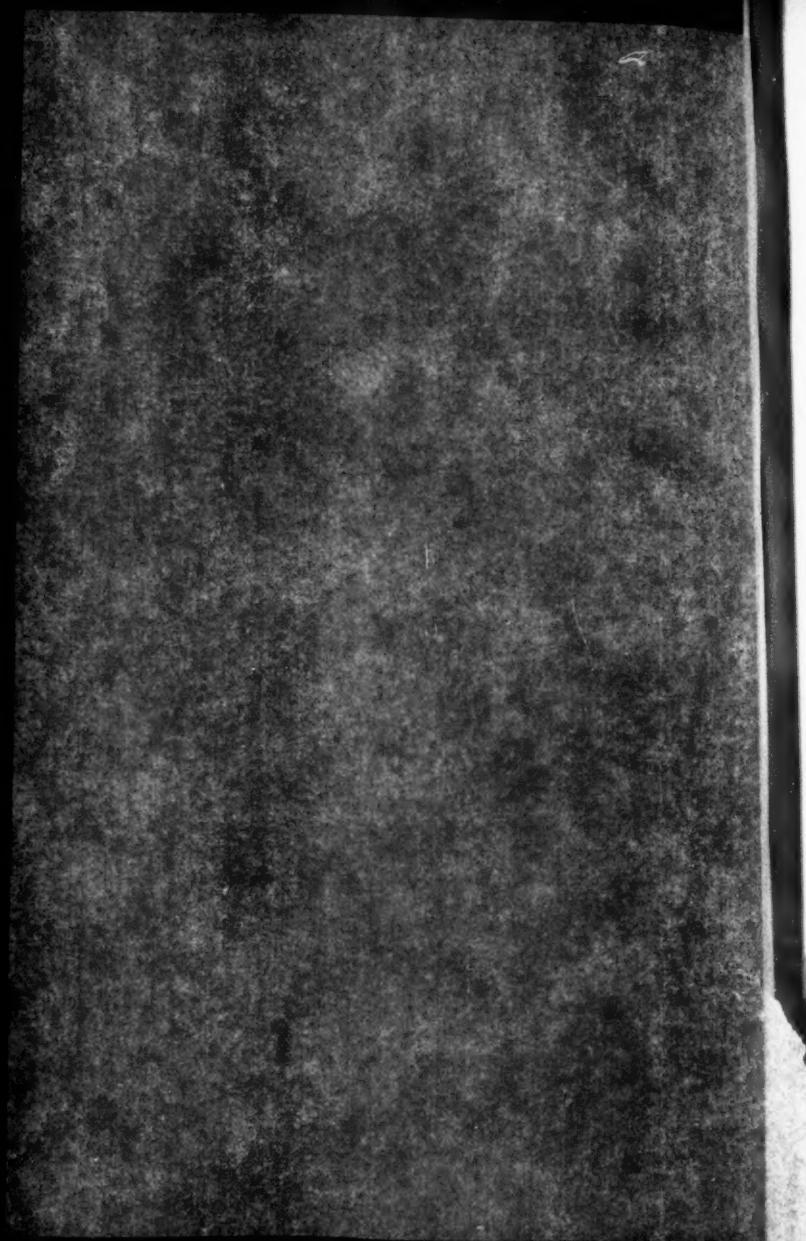
After a little time the photograph was brought forth from his Grace's pocket. That bringing out and giving of photographs, with the demand for counter photographs, is the most absurd practice of the day. "I don't think I look very nice, do I ?" "Oh yes ;—very nice ; but a little too old ; and certainly you haven't got those spots all over your forehead." These are the remarks which on such occasions are the most common. It may be said that to give a photograph or to take a photograph without the utterance of some words which would be felt by a bystander to be absurd, is almost an impossibility. At this moment there was no bystander, and therefore the Duke and the lady had no need for caution. Words were spoken that were very absurd. Madame Goesler protested that the Duke's photograph was more to her than the photographs of all the world beside ; and the Duke declared that he would carry the lady's picture next to his heart,—I am afraid he said for ever and ever. Then he took her hand and pressed it, and was conscious that for a man over seventy years of age he did that kind of thing very well.

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"You must come."

Phineas Finn. Chap. lvii. Page 381.



"You will come and dine with me, Duke?" she said, when he began to talk of going.

"I never dine out."

"That is just the reason you should dine with me. You shall meet nobody you do not wish to meet."

"I would so much rather see you in this way,—I would indeed. I do dine out occasionally, but it is at big formal parties, which I cannot escape without giving offence."

"And you cannot escape my little not formal party,—without giving offence." She looked into his face as she spoke, and he knew that she meant it. And he looked into hers, and thought that her eyes were brighter than any he was in the habit of seeing in these latter days. "Name your own day, Duke. Will a Sunday suit you?"

"If I must come——"

"You must come." As she spoke her eyes sparkled more and more, and her colour went and came, and she shook her curls till they emitted through the air the same soft feeling of a perfume that her note had produced. Then her foot peeped out from beneath the black and yellow drapery of her dress, and the Duke saw that it was perfect. And she put out her finger and touched his arm as she spoke. Her hand was very fair, and her fingers were bright with rich gems. To men such as the Duke, a hand, to be quite fair, should be bright with rich gems. "You must come," she said,—not imploring him now but commanding him.

"Then I will come," he answered, and a certain Sunday was fixed.

The arranging of the guests was a little difficulty, till Madame Goesler begged the Duke to bring with him Lady Glencora Palliser, his nephew's wife. This at last he agreed to do. As the wife of his nephew and heir, Lady Glencora was to the Duke all that a woman could be. She was everything that was proper as to her own conduct, and not obtrusive as to his. She did not bore him, and yet she was attentive. Although in her husband's house she was a fierce politician, in his house she was simply an attractive woman. "Ah; she is very clever," the Duke once said, "she adapts herself. If she were to go from any one place to any other, she would be at home in both." And the movement of his Grace's hand as he spoke seemed to indicate the widest possible sphere for travelling and the widest possible scope for adaptation. The dinner was arranged, and went off very pleasantly. Madame Goesler's eyes were not quite so bright as they were during that morning visit, nor did she touch her guest's arm in a manner so alluring. She was very quiet, allowing her guests to do most of the talking. But the dinner and the flowers and the wine were excellent, and the whole thing was so quiet that the Duke liked it. "And now you must come and dine with me," the Duke said as he took his leave. "A command to that effect will

be one which I certainly shall not disobey," whispered Madame Goesler.

"I am afraid he is going to get fond of that woman." These words were spoken early on the following morning by Lady Glencora to her husband, Mr. Palliser.

"He is always getting fond of some woman, and he will to the end," said Mr. Palliser.

"But this Madame Max Goesler is very clever."

"So they tell me. I have generally thought that my uncle likes talking to a fool the best."

"Every man likes a clever woman the best," said Lady Glencora, "if the clever woman only knows how to use her cleverness."

"I'm sure I hope he'll be amused," said Mr. Palliser innocently. "A little amusement is all that he cares for now."

"Suppose you were told some day that he was going—to be married?" said Lady Glencora.

"My uncle married!"

"Why not he as well as another?"

"And to Madame Goesler?"

"If he be ever married it will be to some such woman."

"There is not a man in all England who thinks more of his own position than my uncle," said Mr. Palliser somewhat proudly,—almost with a touch of anger.

"That is all very well, Plantagenet, and true enough in a kind of way. But a child will sacrifice all that it has for the top brick of the chimney, and old men sometimes become children. You would not like to be told some morning that there was a little Lord Silverbridge in the world." Now the eldest son of the Duke of Omnium, when the Duke of Omnium had a son, was called the Earl of Silverbridge; and Mr. Palliser, when this question was asked him, became very pale. Mr. Palliser knew well how thoroughly the cunning of the serpent was joined to the purity of the dove in the person of his wife, and he was sure that there was cause for fear when she hinted at danger.

"Perhaps you had better keep your eye upon him," he said to his wife.

"And upon her," said Lady Glencora.

When Madame Goesler dined at the Duke's house in St. James's Square there was a large party, and Lady Glencora knew that there was no need for apprehension then. Indeed Madame Goesler was no more than any other guest, and the Duke hardly spoke to her. There was a duchess there,—the Duchess of St. Bungay, and old Lady Hartleap, who was a dowager marchioness,—an old lady who pestered the Duke very sorely,—and Madame Max Goesler received her reward, and knew that she was receiving it, in being asked to meet these people. Would not all these names, including her own,

be blazoned to the world in the columns of the next day's "Morning Post?" There was no absolute danger here, as Lady Glencora knew; and Lady Glencora, who was tolerant and begrudged nothing to Madame Max except the one thing, was quite willing to meet the lady at such a grand affair as this. But the Duke, even should he become ever so childish a child in his old age, still would have that plain green brougham at his command, and could go anywhere in that at any hour in the day. And then Madame Goesler was so manifestly a clever woman. A Duchess of Omnium might be said to fill,—in the estimation, at any rate, of English people,—the highest position in the world short of royalty. And the reader will remember that Lady Glencora intended to be a Duchess of Omnium herself,—unless some very unexpected event should intrude itself. She intended also that her little boy, her fair-haired, curly-pated, bold-faced little boy, should be Earl of Silverbridge when the sand of the old man should have run itself out. Heavens, what a blow would it be, should some little wizen-cheeked half-monkey baby, with black, brown, and yellow skin, be brought forward and shown to her some day as the heir! What a blow to herself;—and what a blow to all England! "We can't prevent it if he chooses to do it," said her husband, who had his budget to bring forward that very night, and who in truth cared more for his budget than he did for his heirship at that moment. "But we must prevent it," said Lady Glencora. "If I stick to him by the tail of his coat, I'll prevent it." At the time when she thus spoke, the dark green brougham had been twice again brought up at the door in Park Lane.

And the brougham was standing there a third time. It was May now, the latter end of May, and the park opposite was beautiful with green things, and the air was soft and balmy, as it will be sometimes even in May, and the flowers in the balcony were full of perfume, and the charm of London,—what London can be to the rich,—was at its height. The Duke was sitting in Madame Goesler's drawing-room, at some distance from her, for she had retreated. The Duke had a habit of taking her hand, which she never would permit for above a few seconds. At such times she would show no anger, but would retreat.

"Marie," said the Duke, "you will go abroad when the summer is over." As an old man he had taken the privilege of calling her Marie, and she had not forbidden it.

"Yes, probably; to Vienna. I have property in Vienna, you know, which must be looked after."

"Do not mind Vienna this year. Come to Italy."

"What; in summer, Duke?"

"The lakes are charming in August. I have a villa on Como which is empty now, and I think I shall go there. If you do not know the Italian lakes, I shall be so happy to show them to you."

"I know them well, my lord. When I was young I was on the Maggiore almost alone. Some day I will tell you a history of what I was in those days."

"You shall tell it me there."

"No, my lord, I fear not. I have no villa there."

"Will you not accept the loan of mine? It shall be all your own while you use it."

"My own,—to deny the right of entrance to its owner?"

"If it so pleases you."

"It would not please me. It would so far from please me that I will never put myself in a position that might make it possible for me to require to do so. No, Duke; it behoves me to live in houses of my own. Women of whom more is known can afford to be your guests."

"Marie, I would have no other guest than you."

"It cannot be so, Duke."

"And why not?"

"Why not? Am I to be put to the blush by being made to answer such a question as that? Because the world would say that the Duke of Omnium had a new mistress, and that Madame Goesler was the woman. Do you think that I would be any man's mistress;—even yours? Or do you believe that for the sake of the softness of a summer evening on an Italian lake, I would give cause to the tongues of the women here to say that I was such a thing? You would have me lose all that I have gained by steady years of sober work for the sake of a week or two of dalliance such as that! No, Duke; not for your dukedom!"

How his Grace might have got through his difficulty had they been left alone, cannot be told. For at this moment the door was opened, and Lady Glencora Palliser was announced.

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"And I ain't in a hurry either,—am I, Mamma?"